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The Week

AFTER Stresa, Geneva; after Geneva, within about a month, Rome. The fact that the European Powers go from one conference to another shows how serious is the situation. They are fighting for time; and since any sort of peace is better than any sort of war, their efforts, for the moment at least, must be applauded. The outcome of the Stresa conference, while inconclusive in the sense that it lacked definite achievement, was in another sense both conclusive and important. The British refused to take any overt steps to deal with Germany, and the British won. The French note to the League Council complaining that Germany has torn up the military sections of the Versailles Treaty does not suggest that the League should do anything drastic as a result. Instead, attention is concentrated on efforts to prevent further violations. These would be largely territorial in character, and therefore even more dangerous as possible sources of war than is the rearming, which is only a preliminary to the seizure of territory. The Stresa conference, as a matter of fact, itself moved some distance toward legalizing German rearmament by consenting at least to consider similar developments in Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. The action was presumably based upon two assumptions: first, that these powers are already rearmed in large degree, and second, that in a crisis they would probably stand with France. The first of these assumptions is true; the second is open to the gravest doubt.

THE conference more or less ignored Germany's offer to participate in a general pact of non-aggression and to raise no objection if the other participants should supplement it by treaties of mutual assistance, provided only that the Hitler government itself is not required to use force against an aggressor. From the French point of view, such a compact as Germany suggests would have little meaning—even less than the League Covenant itself. Meanwhile, behind the scenes at Geneva, France and her allies are drawing up treaties that might be called "air alliances," whose net effect will be not unlike that of the aerial Locarno proposed some time ago at London. Up to date, the result of recent happenings in Europe is a triumph for Hitler. He gambled boldly when he defied the Allies, and he has won. The armament race is on again. The old system of alliance and counter-alliance, which never wholly disappeared, is now back again in the open, though weighted more heavily against Germany than it was in 1914. The treaties of 1919 are dead; the steady march toward war goes on.

IN THE United States, the past week has been dominated by cotton, silver, dust storms, pacifism among college students and the administration's efforts to push through Congress the social-security, banking and other bills. As we report elsewhere in this issue, the owners of cotton-textile mills are making strenuous, if shortsighted, attempts to ameliorate their position both from above and below. They want the processing tax on cotton abolished, and direct gifts to planters from the Treasury substituted, in order to cut the cost of their raw material. They also want Japanese and other cotton textiles prevented from entering this country, so that they can maintain high prices to the

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consumer. Secretary Wallace is fighting vigorously against the effort to destroy the cotton-processing tax, on the ground that if it goes, so will the similar taxes on wheat, corn, hogs, tobacco, et cetera. If we were to begin paying the farmers out of the Treasury, political pressure would soon put a stop to the whole plan and we should return to disastrously low prices, universal poverty among the farmers and the unbalanced internal economy that has been an accentuating factor in the depression.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt firmly rejected the plea for the exclusion of Japanese textiles; but before the news of his action had time to reach Japan, the government of that country had issued a statement of its own in regard to relations with the United States. The Japanese complain that we are interfering with their trade in Central and South America; and point out that if we continue to do so, they will be forced to reduce their large present purchases of raw cotton from us. Washington professes ignorance of the interference with Japanese trade referred to. While it is true that Cuba has denounced her trade treaty with Japan, our government officials say they are aware of no other country that has done so, and claim that Japanese exports to Central and South America are in fact increasing. One of the countries that is now enjoying a large and profitable Japanese trade is Brazil, which has tremendously increased its production of cotton during the last year despite the fact, to which Secretary Wallace has pointed, that the world crop fell slightly in that period. The United States is now selling large quantities of ginning machinery to Brazil and the American ginners are protesting. They say that we are only preparing a competitor who will take business away from themselves. The dilemma is like that of the British many years ago, when capital from Lancashire built textile mills in India which presently competed successfully with those of Manchester. It is aggravated by the fact that we are aiding foreign expansion by restricting our own cotton output, as the British did in the Stevenson rubber scheme. It seems altogether likely that our own government will keep hands off, as the British government did in the Lancashire case, and that our cotton growers will ultimately suffer as did the rubber growers in British colonies.

ON Friday of last week, many thousands of college and high-school students throughout the country participated in an impressive demonstration against war. The number who took part is not accurately known as we go to press, but it may have been as large as 125,000, from 150 or more institutions. In most parts of the country, the demonstrations were orderly and peaceable, the college authorities either keeping hands off or, in some cases, themselves participating by holding general student assemblies, addressed by members of the faculty or guest speakers. A few institutions, however, made every possible attempt to prevent the demonstrations, by threatening or punishing the participants and giving tacit approval to violence by the fascist-minded youngsters of whom a certain proportion is to be found on practically every college campus. It is no accident, in our opinion, that most of the violence, including police repression, was displayed in cities such as Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles, where there are Hearst newspapers; Mr. Hearst has now reached the point of approving and inciting this sort of business throughout the country. Hunter College in New York City managed to reach a low water mark by suspending six students for participating in the demonstrations. While it would be easy to overestimate the value of student activity of this sort, it would also be easy, and a grave mistake, to underestimate it. No one who is familiar with the situation can doubt that a new spirit is stirring in the colleges today. Hundreds of thousands of undergraduates, looking at the world upon whose activities they are about to enter—a world of which war is a characteristic expression—believe that it could hardly be a worse one, and are determined to better it, no matter how drastic the necessary changes may be.

IN The New Republic of April 10, we commented on the result of the Sacramento criminal-syndicalism trial in which eight of the defendants were found guilty, while the others, whose cases seemed entirely similar to the naked eye, were acquitted. We remarked that this fact showed "the trial was a political one and the decision a political compromise." Startling corroboration of this point of view is found in an affidavit by one of the jurors that has just been made public. This individual, Howard S. McIntire, swears that he is not convinced of the guilt of several of the defendants who were convicted; that a bargain was struck among the members of the jury, after they had argued for sixty-six hours and taken one hundred and eighteen ballots. According to the terms of this compromise, McIntire and others agreed to vote that some of the defendants were guilty on one count (in certain cases with a recommendation for probation) if the rest of the jury would agree not to vote that they were guilty on another and more serious count, and would vote for acquittal for the remainder. This bargain was carried out. Evidence regarding the jury's action was presented to Judge D. M. Lemmon, who nevertheless refused a new trial and sentenced the eight who had been convicted to from one to fourteen years in prison. An appeal has been ordered, and we may perhaps finally get the opinion of the United States Supreme Court as to whether this sort of thing constitutes "due process of law."

MR. Clifford Odets is an interesting new American playwright, and perhaps his most interesting product thus far is the one-act play, "Waiting for Lefty," now enjoying a successful run with the Group Theatre in New York City. Mr. Stark

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Young, writing in The New Republic, said of its "resilient little scenes" that they are "sometimes remarkably graphic, secure or moving." Other critics have spoken of it even more warmly, and a presentation of this play won first prize in the Yale Drama Tourney in New Haven last week. Some other people, however, do not think so well of it. The School Buildings Committee in New Haven, an official body, refused to permit its production in the Commercial High School in that city, and in Boston, performance was forbidden on the ground of "obscenity" and four members of the cast were arrested. "Waiting for Lefty" is a play dealing with the strike of the New York City taxi-drivers, and here and there it employs the salty language appropriate to the persons it presents; but there is no doubt whatever that the action of the authorities in New Haven and Boston was based on something else. Indeed, the Boston censor frankly stated that this was the case, and that if the charge of obscenity fell through, another pretext would be found. The real objection is that "Waiting for Lefty" is a revolutionary document; the effort to suppress it is part of the general wave of conservative censorship that is now sweeping the United States. It should, and will, be fought for the same reasons that are valid in regard to all other violations of civil liberties.

WITH one exception every industry, in signing an N.R.A. code, agreed to abolish child labor. The exception was the newspaper-publishing business, whose members argued that the employment of small children to peddle newspapers did not represent the vicious exploitation of child labor so broadly condemned by the public and outlawed by the National Recovery Act. Newsboys, said the publishers, were really "little merchants" taking their first steps on the road toward a business career and should not be deprived of the invaluable business experience to be gained from selling papers. A somewhat more prosaic picture of the "little merchant" is presented in the survey of hours and wages of newsboys recently made by the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor. The survey, covering seventeen cities, shows that the median weekly wage (half earning more, half less) of newspaper sellers in 1934 was $1.41 as against $2.76 in the period of prosperity, 1922-26. Newspaper carriers earned slightly more, $1.87 as against $2.39 in the previous period. Median weekly hours for the newsboys were 15.6, making their rate of compensation roughly nine cents an hour, or approximately half the lowest minimum wage written into any code. These figures do not allow, of course, for the invaluable and intangible remuneration in the form of experience that children employed in the newspaper field are in a unique position to enjoy.

GOVERNOR Eugene Talmadge of Georgia, whose strikebreaking activities last summer endeared him to industrialists of the South, is not a member of the National Textile Labor Relations Board, but the board recently handed down an an opinion that Mr. Talmadge could endorse without compunction. In considering the complaint of union employees of the Alexander Manufacturing Company in North Carolina, who went out during the great textile strike of last September and whose places were filled by strikebreakers, the board ruled that since the strike was lost the company was under no obligation to reinstate the strikers. (Pickets kept the mill closed for a week, but "lost" the strike when the mill was reopened with the aid of a "light military guard.") The company was not guilty of discrimination, said the board, because

> the failure to reinstate the strikers to their former positions was not due to their union activities, but to the fact that others had been employed in their stead . . . and no work was available for them after the strike was called off.

Furthermore, while the board recognizes the right of workers to strike, it believes that "coequal with this right are the rights of the miller to run his mill and the other employees to work." This is, of course, precisely the reasoning used by Governor Talmadge in calling out the troops and declaring martial law during the strike. He was protecting the "God-given right to work." Needless to say, it is such decisions, coupled with the enforced reduction of working hours, that are paving the way for a new and more desperate strike in textiles.

How Capitalism Commits Suicide

ONE OF the most curious phenomena of nineteenth-century liberalism (and of its survival in the twentieth century) is the way in which capitalist institutions are always disregarding the precepts of the very economists who explain and support capitalism. Traditional economic theory advocates competition within nations and absence of trade barriers among them; yet the private owners of industry simply will not compete if they can help it, and continually press for more tariffs. Theory asks for large-volume production and low prices; yet those who control production create as much scarcity and as high prices as they can. The economists talk as if private enterprise in doing this sort of thing were disregarding its own best interests and needed only education to mend its ways. The fact that private enterprise keeps on doing it, decade after decade, indicates either that the economists are most unskillful educators or that they really do not understand what powerful forces making for self-destruction exist in an advanced capitalist order.

The recent plea to the President made by the New England textile interests is as good an example as one could wish for. It begins by setting forth the facts, which are a picture of disaster—no ques-

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tion about it. In 1923 wages paid by manufacturers in Massachusetts were about $800,000,000; in 1933 they were $355,000,000. The number of persons employed shrank in the same decade from 668,000 to 399,000. In the cotton-goods industry alone, the wage bill shrank from $115,000,000 to $31,000,000, and the number of employees from 114,000 to 45,000. This decline is not due entirely to the general depression. The number of spindles in place in Massachusetts was 37,000,000 fifteen years ago; now it is 10,000,000, of which only 6,000,000 are operating. These conditions are typical of New England regions outside of Massachusetts as well. The Amoskeag mills in Manchester, New Hampshire, which normally employ 16,000 persons, are threatening to scrap their plant, thus ruining the city in which they exist. There was a temporary improvement in the New England industry just before the adoption of the Textile Code, but since 1933 its condition has become worse. Whatever exaggerations there may be in the manufacturers' statement, there is not the slightest doubt that in the main it correctly portrays the situation.

What remedy is proposed? The statement is based on the studies of "twenty-two professors of economics, representing the leading universities of Massachusetts," and, if one is to believe its text, embodies the recommendations of these professors. Do they go back to the principles on which their doctrine is based? Far from it. They say nothing about the necessity of freedom of trade, about the desirability of competition, about the social benefit arising from the elimination of the less efficient competitors, about large volume and low prices, about the need of flexible readjustments in response to the automatic forces of the market. Instead, they aim to "provide employment in the manufacture of textile goods to Americans rather than to the people of other countries" by adopting an import duty "equivalent to the cost of production in America, plus ten percent." This would, of course, prohibit all imports of cotton goods, if administered as the manufacturers would want it administered. It would do so even if the phrase is not intended to mean exactly what it says, but rather a duty sufficient to make the price of imported cotton goods equivalent to the American "cost of production" plus ten percent. The committee wants not only this, but a "prohibition upon all goods imported from other countries that have failed to pay their war debts." In other words, it wants an embargo upon all imports from Europe—except Finland. It wants, not only to hamper imports but virtually to destroy foreign trade altogether.

Let it be noted here that any import barrier that prevented foreigners from selling in this country would also prevent them from buying raw cotton grown here; and about half of our crop is normally sold abroad. Imagine the effect on the prices of cotton to the New England mills. This is not mentioned in the statement, but it could hardly have escaped the attention of the twenty-two Massachusetts professors.

The next recommendation is that the processing tax be abolished, in order to reduce the price of raw cotton. Apparently the manufacturers have progressed far enough in intelligence to understand, however, that farmers buy textiles and thus must have some purchasing power. Having demanded monopoly for themselves, they are willing to let the cotton growers also get some benefit from restriction of output. But they do not want to bear the cost. They ask that it be saddled on others by charging the benefit payments, which are the bait for restriction, to public-works funds or a general sales tax.

Having thus asked, first, that the prices they charge be raised and that the prices they pay be reduced, they go on to attend to that other important element of cost—wages. They object to the differentials between Northern and Southern minimum wages now written into the Textile Code. But they do not therefore ask for the abolition of the code. No indeed. They ask rather that government regulation be used to equalize Northern and Southern wages. It is doubtful whether, under "free competition" these wage levels were equal. Labor also wants to equalize these wages by bringing up the Southern scales. We hardly believe that this is the way in which the manufacturers want to achieve equalization. But in either case there is little difference in the principle. They want, not laissez-faire, but governmental power used for their advantage.

There are phrases in the statement that would lead one to believe that the mills want the ability to reduce prices and so to enlarge production, as when they say that the processing tax "has so increased the cost of production as to make it impossible for mills to sell their products at a price that the consuming public is willing to pay." But the rest of the report indicates clearly enough that they do not intend to do this. They complain bitterly, for instance, about Japanese competition. When the President pointed out that if Japanese imports of cotton goods into the United States continue at the new high level, they will constitute only seven-tenths of one percent of the domestic production, the reply was that the competition, though small in volume, has a ruinous effect on prices. And, to cap the climax, the statement asks for "a single working-week schedule to end overproduction in the textile industry." In other words, the mills, which now restrict output through the code by means of a maximum two-shift operation, want to restrict it still more. They regard the existing amount of output as "overproduction."

The remedy thus boils down to the stock one adopted by virtually every capitalist industry and every capitalist nation: restrict output, raise selling prices, and try to throw the burden on someone else. It is part of the internecine struggle for a larger share of an existing scarcity, a struggle that ag-

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gravates the scarcity. And it is proposed not merely by the owners of the cotton mills themselves, but by the twenty-two professors of economics.

Why is it that not only the untutored business men, but the economists themselves, who ought to know better, turn to this suicidal program? The answer is that any other course is also suicidal *for the interests concerned,* and perhaps more promptly so. The Massachusetts cotton-textile industry is worrying about the Massachusetts textile industry, not about a world capitalist economy. It really is in peril by competition from Japan and from Southern mills; its costs really have been increased by the processing tax and the higher wage scales. It is fighting for its life. Capitalism as a whole cannot work unless its constituent units have so little power that they cannot save themselves, when they are threatened by the "forces of the market." When they have not the power, the unfortunate regions and groups are bound to suffer from losses, unemployment and perhaps final extinction; when they have the power, they tend to strangle each other and the system in which they exist.

Father Coughlin's Program

THE DANGER embodied in popular agitators like Huey Long and Father Coughlin is not that they do not express legitimate aspirations of the people or that they promise what is impossible to achieve. They are experts in assessing real needs and sensing the drift of the anonymous masses; by this means they have built up their large followings. To this process no true democrat can object; if our civilization is ever to become what it aspires to be, agitation against injustice is essential. The critical questions, however, concern the means by which they propose to make real their promises. The mark of the demagogue, sincere or insincere, is that his means are inappropriate to his declared ends; he channels off the hopes and resentments of the citizens into a foggy cloud of words; he rouses their resolution only to dissipate it in ineffectuality. If such a man ever gains power, and finds that on account of the inadequacy of his program he cannot make good his promises, he is likely to use his main ability—which is to stimulate blind loyalty among his followers rather than to gain tangible results—in holding power and blocking off those who are better fitted than he to govern.

We are therefore indebted to Father Coughlin for a frank and intelligible statement of his program—the principles of his National Union for Social Justice. They are as follows:

1. I believe in the right of liberty of conscience and liberty of education, not permitting the state to dictate either my worship to my God or my chosen vocation in life.

2. I believe that every citizen willing to work and capable of working shall receive a just and living annual wage which will enable him to maintain and educate his family according to the standards of American decency.

3. I believe in nationalizing those public necessities which by their very nature are too important to be held in the control of private individuals. By these I mean banking, credit and currency, power, light, oil and natural gas and our God-given natural resources.

4. I believe in private ownership of all other property.

5. I believe in upholding the right to private property, yet of controlling it for the public good.

6. I believe in the abolition of the privately owned Federal Reserve Banking system and in the establishing of a government-owned Central Bank.

7. I believe in rescuing from the hands of private owners the right to coin and regulate the value of money, which right must be restored to Congress, where it belongs.

8. I believe that one of the chief duties of this government-owned Central Bank is to maintain the cost of living on an even keel and the repayment of dollar debts with equal value dollars.

9. I believe in the cost of production plus a fair profit for the farmer.

10. I believe not only in the right of the laboring man to organize in unions, but also in the duty of the government which that laboring man supports to facilitate and to protect these organizations against the vested interests of wealth and of intellect.

11. I believe in the recall of all non-productive bonds and thereby in the alleviation of taxation.

12. I believe in the abolition of all tax-exempt bonds.

13. I believe in the broadening of the base of taxation founded upon the ownership of wealth and the capacity to pay.

14. I believe in the simplification of government, and the further lifting of crushing taxation from the slender revenues of the laboring class.

15. I believe that in the event of a war for the defense of our nation and its liberties, there shall be a conscription of wealth as well as a conscription of men.

16. I believe in preferring the sanctity of human rights to the sanctity of property rights. I believe that the chief concern of government shall be for the poor because, as it is witnessed, the rich have ample means of their own to care for themselves.

Analysis of this program reveals at once that numbers 1, 2, 9 and 16 are generalities or aims that are shared by many who have different concrete proposals. A universal decent living wage, a fair profit for the farmer, a chief concern by government for the welfare of the poor, are mere pious wishes unless society is properly organized to effectuate them. Even so, they are not very far-reaching or radical aims when compared with Father Coughlin's fervid radio oratory. They do not speak of abundance for the workers and farmers, or of equitable sharing, or of abolishing poverty. They are, one would say, the language of alleviation rather than that of genuine social justice.

The other numbers concern the means that Father Coughlin proposes in order to effectuate

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these aims. They are: national ownership of a central bank (but not, as he has explained elsewhere, of the commercial or member banks), stabilization of the price level (presumably by the credit policy of the central bank), nationalization of industries like power and light, oil, natural gas and other natural resources, but private ownership of all other industries, some sort of control or regulation of private industry for the public good (but not through such agencies as the N.R.A., or the A.A.A., which he opposes), government protection of the right of labor to organize, the abolition of tax-exempt bonds, more taxation of wealth, reduction of governmental expenses through "simplification of government" and conscription of wealth in war.

This program adds little to the New Deal, and subtracts from it important kinds of regulation that the New Deal has attempted. The administration has often declared its aim to stabilize the price level, and, through Mr. Eccles, has come out for a government-owned central bank, by means of which it hopes to do the job. Mr. Roosevelt has often expressed the desire to control private industry for the public good and wishes to protect the right of labor to organize. If the Wagner labor-disputes bill should pass, it is difficult to see what more could be done in that direction under a capitalist regime. Presumably Mr. Roosevelt would have no objection to the abolition of tax-exempt bonds. He is certainly favorable to the proposal to extend taxation of wealth, when the time is ripe; one of his main campaign promises was to simplify government and reduce its expense, and he actively supports a proposal that is supposed to embody conscription of wealth in war.

If, by these means, Mr. Roosevelt has been unable to guarantee to the workers a decent living wage or to the farmers a fair profit, how could anyone else do better? It is true that the government central bank is not yet established, but even when it is, we can admit that it could accomplish the desired result only if we accept two propositions: (1) that a central bank's control of credit can stabilize the price level, and (2) that a stabilized price level would prevent depressions, bring abundance and make possible security for wage-earners and farmers. These are the contentions that most of Father Coughlin's oratory has been devoted to asserting—though not to proving. But, as a result of careful analysis, we are compelled to reject both. No central credit policy can be fully effective when the banks that are relied upon to administer it are privately owned, profit-seeking institutions. A stable average of commodity prices was maintained during the last boom, yet the central banking authorities were unable to restrict the use of credit for security speculation. No blanket credit policy can prevent the occurrence of injurious disparities among different classes of prices and incomes, disparities that are fully as serious as variations in the average level of all prices. We have had an easy credit policy during most of the depression; yet low interest rates and ample reserves have not greatly increased prices or stimulated economic activity.

Labor organizations are necessary, but they cannot force a sharing of more than is produced; it is the failure to produce abundance that is the greatest evil of a capitalist economy.

The crucial defect of Father Coughlin's program is, of course, in the matter of control over the means of production themselves, which carries with it control over wages, prices and production. He recommends nationalization—by which we assume he means public ownership—of public utilities and natural resources. This is a step in advance of the Roosevelt program. But is it enough? Many capitalist countries that have suffered severe depression do have a substantial degree of public ownership in these limited fields. Beyond this Father Coughlin positively advocates private ownership tempered by some sort of unspecified "control." This attitude he backs up in his radio speeches by scathing denunciation of socialism or communism. But how can private industry be regulated in such a way as to provide abundance; how can we make it pay decent living annual wages to all? This is the heart of the problem, and nobody has provided a satisfactory answer, least of all Father Coughlin. He condemns the very attempts at regulation that the administration has tried: they have turned out to be self-regulation of private industry in the interest of profit. But what else can we expect, as long as the economic system is organized about the profit motive and as long as private industry, through its property rights, retains the power to make the central decisions?

It is not quite true that Father Coughlin's agitation is "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," but that is pretty close to the truth. It is full of sound and fury all right, and its definite content is puny compared with its pretensions. No doubt he is subjectively "sincere," but that does not prevent him from being a dangerous demagogue—dangerous, not because he promises too much, but because he does not know how to fulfill his promises.

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Grand Vizier: Donald R. Richberg

BEFORE Richberg, as head of the National Emergency Council, must come every major administration project, to be expedited or quietly killed. In the latest N.R.A. executive board, Richberg casts the deciding vote. No one else in the administration is so frequent a visitor at the White House. After Roosevelt, probably Richberg has more power, at the moment, than any other man in Washington.

It is no accident that power has moved toward Richberg. The men around Roosevelt tend to fall into three groups: those from big business, whom the country distrusts; those from the universities, who are too timid to assert themselves, and those recommended by Farley, who are not over bright. Richberg towers above most of his associates. He has a record of devoted service on behalf of the poor and weak, has had experience in large affairs and is tenacious, methodical and immensely industrious.

Richberg's largely bald head, long forehead and chubby features give him the look of an amiable woodchuck. His appearance of sluggishness, however, is wholly deceptive. In action, the movements of his tall, bulky body are as quick as those of a trout in a pool. Among other accomplishments, he is a first-rate squash player. His public manner is frequently diffident, inquiring. On these occasions, he smokes a cigar as most people do cigarettes, popping the cigar into his mouth and taking a single, hurried puff. Beneath his prosaic exterior, Richberg has, in fact, a shy, uneasy soul. He is the author of three novels and an autobiography, and at least one novel and the autobiography are filled with mystical yearnings. He has written a large quantity of verse, none yet published. He is an assiduous musician and amateur composer; his one published musical work is "Smoke Dreams," song of the Phi Gamma Deltas.

The story of Richberg's part in the New Deal ought to be that of superior virtue finding due recognition. Actually, it is the story of a community tragedy. At the start of the Roosevelt administration, no man possessed the faith of liberals, radicals and labor leaders to the degree that Richberg did. These people now feel that Richberg has deserted them and betrayed their common cause. One elderly labor leader refuses to speak Richberg's name or have it mentioned in his presence, like the father in an old-fashioned melodrama who has just driven his child out into the snowstorm. Other people are less dramatic, but have the same emotion of hurt and anger.

The first months of Richberg's term with the N.R.A. are largely explained by his association, ultimately ending in disaster, with General Hugh S. Johnson. In his Saturday Evening Post articles, Johnson has told his side of their spectacular quarrel. To many Washington onlookers, including myself, Johnson's accusations of treachery on Richberg's part are absurdly untrue. In the beginning, Richberg displayed inordinate devotion to Johnson, of the same quality that he now shows for Roosevelt. No sign of friction was visible until about February, 1934. By then, you will recall, the codes had been written, and the N.R.A. was faced by the problem of enforcement; specifically, whether to permit or forbid price-fixing and company unions. General Johnson wrestled with these questions like a cowboy bulldogging a steer. Sometimes, however, observers found it hard to tell whether the General was in front, trying to throw the steer, or around behind, trying to hold it up on its legs. Through all the dust and confusion, Richberg remained cheerfully calm and, with his powerful, orderly, Teutonic mind, ready to do all his own work, and all the General's, too.

However, Richberg insisted upon giving advice, and this proved fatal. He undertook to advise the General not merely upon his official activities, but upon his private behavior as well, the latter preoccupying Richberg greatly. In the earlier days of the Blue Eagle's glory, when N.R.A. paraders filled the nation's streets, Johnson might have brushed this aside. But by the spring of 1934, Johnson was battered and weary; he flared up violently at Richberg's criticisms, and, without reason, seems to have imputed sinister motives to him.

As Johnson tells in "The Blue Eagle from Egg to Earth," the final break came indirectly over the reorganization of Senator Wagner's National Labor Board. Johnson wanted the new board under the N.R.A. Miss Perkins wanted it put into the Labor Department. She not only believed this best for labor, but feared that if she once gave up jurisdiction over labor disputes, she would rapidly find her whole department being siphoned away into the N.R.A. Richberg's by now attenuated devotion to the General was partly balanced by his sympathy for Miss Perkins. Above most members of the administration, he was accustomed to women of character and authority. He had been an advocate of feminism for years, and had seen his own mother, a woman of great gifts, become a practising physician at past fifty. In the struggle between Miss Perkins and Johnson, Richberg was like a military dispatch bearer caught between opposing machine gunners, and, by all accounts, he fell prone on the ground, and let the bullets sing over his head.

Miss Perkins won out and, unjustly, the full force of Johnson's anger struck upon Richberg. Some weeks before this, Johnson and Richberg had

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gone together to Roosevelt, and urged upon him the need to coördinate New Deal activities through a rejuvenated National Emergency Council. Roosevelt had agreed, and given the job to Richberg. Accordingly, Richberg now withdrew to the N.E.C., from which, probably with human satisfaction, he watched Johnson destroy himself with his Berkeley, California, speech, calling for the blood of the San Francisco strikers, and his Carnegie Hall speech against the textile strikers, in which he sacrilegiously (and unfairly) mentioned Justice Brandeis.

It is impossible to see anything reprehensible in Richberg's conduct. Not Richberg, but Johnson himself, brought about Johnson's retirement. To the extent that Richberg tried to bring order and regularity into the N.R.A. he should have had the General's gratitude. Yet it is characteristic of Richberg's hyper-sensitiveness that when he heard of Johnson's articles for The Saturday Evening Post he should take to his bed and threaten suit for libel on the basis of statements that, upon his own admission, he hadn't seen. Johnson's immediate, self-possessed reply: "Donald's agitation is just a symtom of the ants of conscience in his pants," rendered him silent for nearly two months, after which, in a speech in Miami, Florida, he retorted with his joke about "the Blue Eagle, from egg to egomania."

Richberg's is a cleverer joke than Johnson's, but too obviously pondered over to be good. Richberg's greatest public handicap is his almost complete lack of spontaneity. Once, on the day last year that the Wirt inquiry was held in Congress, he forgot himself long enough to pencil:

> A cuttlefish squirt,
> Nobody hurt,
> From beginning to end;
> Dr. Wirt.

which as verse was terrible but, being spontaneous, was charming. Still inspired, the same evening he interpolated in a formal speech: "When any man ventures to scoff at the use of brains in government, he should be asked to explain by what part of the anatomy he believes human affairs should be conducted."

Unlike his quarrel with Johnson, Richberg's quarrel with the A.F. of L. and left-wing opinion is a deeply serious matter. It involves the genuineness of the whole New Deal, and the genuineness of Richberg himself, as well. After smoldering for a year, last January it broke out in open conflict over the extension of the N.R.A. Automobile Code, a conflict marked by a personal venom seldom seen in public life.

Labor's continuing sense of betrayal by Richberg is explicable only against the background of his association with the labor movement. Richberg was born in 1881, at Knoxville, Tennessee. For the benefit of Washington news-letter writers, who periodically picture the New Deal as a Jewish conspiracy with Richberg at its head, let it be said at once that he is not a Jew. In fact he began his term as N.R.A. counsel amid outraged protests from Jewish organizations for having described the proposed N.R.A. codes of fair competition as "the New Testament against the Old Testament, the Sermon on the Mount against the Mosaic Law."

Richberg was raised in Chicago and attended the University of Chicago and the Harvard Law School. Upon graduation, he entered the corporation law office of his father, whom Chicago residents recall as the type of Prussian authoritarian. Almost at once, the younger Richberg revolted against corporation law and great corporations. For a time he sought to establish himself as a writer. His mother had written a novel in 1893, "Bunker Hill to Chicago," a quaint and excellent book. Richberg published "The Shadow Men," 1911, "In the Dark," 1912, and "A Man of Purpose," 1922. The last was partly autobiographical, and "Tents of the Mighty," 1930, was frankly so. We have seldom had a man in public office as fully documented as Richberg. His books and innumerable speeches, taken together, afford an almost clinical study of his character. For example, in all three of his novels you find an unspectacular but competent hero giving devoted admiration to a spectacular but disorderly friend. It seems to me you could have no better evidence of Richberg's predisposition to have a fondness for, and loyalty to, General Johnson.

The Bull Moose movement against malefactor corporations of great wealth gave Richberg his first chance to act upon the dark, rebellious emotions inside him. Theodore Roosevelt, considered wild, radical and dangerous in those days, had no more devoted follower than Richberg. In "Tents of the Mighty," Richberg says that at the old Colonel's death in 1919: "I could only press my face into the pillow and cry like a child."

Richberg took part in Professor C. E. Merriam's campaign for mayor of Chicago, in which he had Harold L. Ickes and Jerome Frank as associates, and in the 1912 and 1916 presidential campaigns. After Roosevelt's death, and an interlude of war patriotism for which he has since expressed profuse shame, he shifted his allegiance leftwards to Senator La Follette and became one of La Follette's most industrious helpers. Parallel with this political activity, he grew increasingly immersed in left-wing and labor causes. Appointed special attorney for Chicago gas litigation through Professor Merriam's influence, he conducted interminable lawsuits against Samuel Insull and the People's Gas, Light and Coke Company. He once called Insull "a silver-plated anarchist," a phrase widely repeated. Later he became associated with the fascinating, visionary Glenn E. Plumb, and spent months in Washington as assistant lobbyist for the Plumb Plan. Plumb died, but Richberg went on to become chief counsel to the railway brotherhoods. He argued against the Daugherty injunction in the 1922 shopmen's strike, drafted the present Railway Labor Act and, following a special vote of the Senate, appeared

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before the Supreme Court in the O'Fallon railroad valuation case, "the greatest lawsuit in history," as Richberg points out in his autobiography.

In Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 presidential campaign, Richberg was summoned to help write the campaign railroad speech. After the election, in association with Miss Perkins and Senator Wagner, he undertook to draft a bill for compulsory shortening of hours. He was told by Roosevelt to work with General Johnson, then installed in a cubbyhole in the State Department. Here the N.R.A. and the P.W.A. were hammered out, most of the actual phraseology being drafted by Richberg. Richberg's appointment as N.R.A. counsel was immensely reassuring to labor. He had fought corporate wealth in Chicago, been a member of the brotherhoods' board of strategy and, in his own phrase, been "a worker behind the scenes" for labor legislation in Congress. The episcopal hands of Senator La Follette had been laid on him. He was a living pledge that labor could expect justice from the N.R.A..

Soon after taking office, Richberg made a speech warning "well fed, jovial men and well dressed, cheerful women" that "the much discussed revolution" had arrived. The steel companies were forced to agree to the unionization of their captive coal mines, and the old National Labor Board was set up. Organized labor's faith in Richberg continued until, in February, 1934, he signed, with General Johnson, a joint interpretation of Section 7a, approving collective bargaining by minority groups. In my opinion, the interpretation in itself was unimportant. But what was important, vitally so, was that both employers and labor considered it hostile to independent unions and favorable to company unions. Since it was unlikely that high wages and a mass consumers' market could be maintained without independent unionism, this company-union issue went to the heart of New Deal economics. Since Roosevelt had been elected on a pledge of justice to the industrial worker as a forgotten man, it also went to the New Deal's moral foundations.

Company unionism was the basic issue in the controversy over the Automobile Code, last January, perhaps the worst defeat for the A.F. of L. under the New Deal. It must be remembered that the A.F. of L., at its San Francisco convention, had voted to organize the automobile industry. Unionization of the industry was thus a test of the A.F. of L.'s powers, and its ability to transform itself into a mass organization. Rightly or wrongly, the A.F. of L. believed the N.R.A. Auto Labor Board was serving to protect company unions, and, as the time for the Automobile Code's extension approached, it resolved to force a showdown, not merely on the Auto Labor Board's continuance, but on the whole company-union question. However, this showdown never took place, and this was because of Richberg. During the day on which the extension of the Automobile Code was signed by Roosevelt, the A.F. of L. leaders were given to understand by Richberg's office that no action would be taken. During the day, Miss Perkins, Richberg's former ally, telephoned him half a dozen times, only to be told he was out. Next day, when the news of the Code's extension became known, John L. Lewis emitted a blast of frustrated rage. He called Richberg a traitor, spoke of the "nocturnal emergence of the partisan conspirators" (the Automobile Code Authority members) from the White House, and added: "One can imagine the giggling, falsetto cackles of Mr. Richberg when the strain was over and the deed was done." This was meant to hurt, for Richberg has, in fact, a high-pitched laugh when telling of a stratagem's success. During the recent peace-making at the White House, when Richberg was made head of the N.I.R.B., Lewis conspicuously avoided shaking Richberg's hand before the news photographers.

To say, as the A.F. of L. leaders now do, that Richberg maneuvered the Automobile Code's extension for his present or future personal advantage seems to me preposterous. Such an accusation is irreconcilable with his long, altruistic service to labor. Yet some explanation is needed. Whether the A.F. of L. was wise in trying to force a showdown on the Automobile Code may be a matter of opinion. But in fact a crisis did exist in the minds of both employers and labor. One side or the other had to take a beating, and Richberg let himself be made an instrument for labor's defeat.

Richberg's own defense of his conduct is that he is a progressive, equally opposed to communists and tories, the "destroyers on the left and right." This is as absurd as the A.F. of L.'s accusation that he sold out to the employers. If Richberg had stood with the A.F. of L. against the Automobile Code and company unions, he would not have been a communist, nor, last December, would he have been one had he stood with Chairman Biddle against Hearst in the Jennings case. All Richberg means by talking about the "destroyers on the left and right" is that his feelings have been hurt by labor's reproaches and he wishes they would end.

One possible clue to Richberg's conduct is furnished by "A Man of Purpose," in which, after pages of tortured cerebration, Richberg's hero determines to stand with labor and defy the owning and employing class. He is counsel for a striking union of mine workers. In open court, he denounces a federal judge who is about to issue an injunction, and is at once sentenced to jail for contempt. But instead of being upborne by an inner satisfaction and sense of solidarity with the strikers, the hero falls into a funk, and within a few paragraphs the book ends. The effect is extremely odd. It is as if, when Richberg pictured to himself an act of militancy, he was overtaken by panic and his imagination ceased to function.

Beyond doubt, since his days in his father's law office, Richberg's hatred of the injustices of the owning and employing class has been genuine. But

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he seems a rebel who cannot permit himself to revolt. This was true in his long winded lawsuits against Insull, and his efforts to construct a complicated compulsory arbitration system for the brotherhoods. A few weeks ago in a speech at Boston, he went out of his way to denounce company unions as "contemptible," almost at the same time that he was secretly procuring the continuance of the N.R.A. Auto Labor Board. This is apparently his pattern. In times of quiet, he will unceasingly arraign injustices practised upon the poor and weak, but in times of crisis, as happened in the Automobile Code case, his moral apparatus is likely to blow up as if a land mine had exploded under it.

Richberg's ambition, supposedly, has been to go to the Supreme Court. But, despite the present semblance of reconciliation, the A.F. of L. will, and can, defeat his confirmation in the Senate if he should be nominated. He has alienated most of his oldest and closest political friends, which must be a bitter thing for him to contemplate. Radicals and labor are so implacably opposed to him that, in time, he may be forced out of the administration. Meanwhile, however, he remains Roosevelt's chief adviser, and the second most important figure in the New Deal.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

The Dilemma of Eugenics

LET THIS be admitted at once: the eugenists got off to a bad start, and have ever since, despite heroic efforts, been noticeably out of step with the rigorous procedures of science. Thanks to its brilliant and very aristocratic founder Sir Francis Galton, eugenics—defined as the conscious control of human evolution by biological means—began with a number of assumptions that do more honor to the heart than the head. One of these assumptions, implicit in the definition, takes the form of a belief, more or less naïve, more or less subtly expressed, that all human characteristics, good, bad and indifferent, can as it were be turned on and off merely by a suitable manipulation of various *biological* stop-cocks. From this proceeds the curious economic myopia and social chauvinism of the eugenists, that "ultra-Calvinistic attitude" which Lancelot Hogben is not alone in deploring. "We are all," they proclaim, with a flourish of statistical trumpets, "at the mercy of our germ-plasm—that is to say of our parents and ancestors to a remote past. Society itself is a function of just these variables and will become a utopia as soon as we learn how to eliminate the bad and promote the good."

The danger of this view, as well as its great appeal for the uncritical, lies in its extraordinary plausibility. For not even the most daring geneticist can, or would, deny the overwhelming significance of pre-natal factors both for the individual and the community. Since the rediscovery (unfortunately subsequent to Galton's work) of Mendel's researches on heredity in sweet peas, and down to the latest investigations of our own T. H. Morgan on fruit flies, it has been increasingly recognized that the unit of heredity, the *gene*, sets the general direction of our biological existence beyond hope of appeal. But—whether the road itself is straight or crooked, smooth or rough, must depend upon the nature of society. This is why J. B. S. Haldane remarks, "If the structure of society is such that the best stocks are being bred out, *we must change that structure*" (italics mine). It is why the American geneticist, Dr. H. J. Muller, wrote an article, "The Dominance of Economics over Eugenics," in which he said:

> We might as well admit that the forces at work are quite beyond the control of us as eugenists, in the society in which we live. For they are fundamentally economic forces. The social direction of human evolution (as Kellicott aptly terms eugenics) can occur only under a socially directed economic system. . . . All this presupposes public ownership of the means of production.

In a word, eugenics, through its fatal indifference to, or neglect of, the stupendous economic contradictions of modern society, has become a palliative weapon, not a curative—or even preventive—one. It leaves untouched, by any effective criticism, the entire price and profit system out of which, as many of its own most loyal advocates fully recognize, issue the very dysgenic (socially undesirable) evils it proposes to attack with secondary biological methods. It tries to save the present system by juggling with the germ-plasm in the interests of an arbitrarily defined "social fitness" which, even if theoretically achieved by individuals or groups here and there, would be quite impossible to maintain in a society itself appallingly unfit to satisfy the elementary biological demand for security.

It is thus by no means an accident that, as Mr. Whitney points out in a provocative volume published last year,[1] popular interest in the chief weapon of "negative" eugenics—sterilization—synchronized with the advent to power of Adolf Hitler, or that the notorious nationalism of the Nazis should attack the whole gigantic problem of its 400,000 socially "unfit" (made so by four years of war plus fifteen years of unrelieved economic and political suffering) from its scientifically least

[1] The Case for Sterilization, by Leon F. Whitney. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 309 pages. $2.50.

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secure angle: the *mentally* deficient. It is true that Mr. Whitney, who is a director of the American Eugenics Society and a diligent student of the biological problems of race betterment, "holds no brief for Herr Hitler," but it comes with something of a shock to hear from him that "many far-sighted men and women in both England and America have long been working earnestly toward something very like what Hitler has now made compulsory."

No unprejudiced and informed observer today disputes the value of sterilization as (1) a therapeutic measure indicated for certain genital ailments in both sexes; (2) a protection for women physically incapable of childbirth; (3) a foolproof, if still virtually irrevocable, substitute for artificial contraceptives, with resulting freedom from anxiety, superfluous children and the danger of abortion; (4) a safeguard against the propagation of definitely genetic diseases or malformations, which Hogben estimates at about thirty, including the evasive and very troublesome forms due to autosomal recessive genes. Mr. Whitney's summary of the problem along these lines and his sober, if too brief and casual, discussion of the scientific (Mendelian) background of sterilization, is all to the good, as is also the historical material tracing the growth of the movement from its early beginnings in the United States (Indiana was the trailblazer) to the present, which finds this country still in the lead, with twenty-eight states legalizing sterilization and over 16,000 operations on record, more than half of them performed in California in a period of twenty-five years. Of particular interest are Mr. Whitney's chapters on "Objections Most Often Urged" against sterilization. Sixteen of these are noted (including those raised by the famous Papal Encyclical on Chastity in 1931), and duly rebutted. But here, also, the persistence of the eugenics dilemma is shown by the fact that not one of the objections seriously raises Haldane's pertinent challenge to "change the structure" of society before rendering a final verdict of guilt against the germ-plasm.

The venerable question, "Who will bell the cat?" stares our eugenists in the face under the form, "Whom shall we sterilize; how many, and by what criteria?" Mr. Whitney, in common with many others, including Dr. Paul Popenoe and Mr. E. S. Gosney of the Human Betterment Foundation in California, is alarmed by the magnitude and menace of the problem of the feeble-minded. And right here we have an example of improper statistical analysis. First of all, the much criticized Army Alpha tests are cited to give us a figure of 4,800,000 white Americans rated as mentally subnormal (I. Q. below 70). Second, and by way of confirmation, we are presented with the results of an investigation of 5,000 subnormal children in New Haven, which comes to the conclusion that "slightly over five percent of New Haven's citizens are feeble-minded." Abruptly, with only the most cursory "if" thrown in, this conclusion swells until it covers the whole country. Result: five out of every hundred American citizens (30 percent if we consider the Negroes alone) are feeble-minded. Even Mr. Whitney is a little staggered by this: "Let us hope," he adds, "that the New Haven figures are not typical."

But what, once more, *is* feeble-mindedness (or any other form of mental deficiency)? According to what frame of reference can it be defined, not to say correctly diagnosed and cured? In his admirable book, "Nature and Nurture," Lancelot Hogben has laid it down that "No statement about a genetic difference has any scientific meaning unless it includes or implies *a specification of the environment* in which it manifests itself in a particular manner" (emphasis mine). J. H. Landman, with whose valuable monograph on "Human Sterilization" Mr. Whitney is familiar, affirms that "the study of the causes of the mental diseases and the mental deficiencies has thus far been practically fruitless," so far as an assured scientific base is concerned. From the exceedingly careful researches on twins carried out by Newman and Burks in America and by Tallman, Hermann and Hogben in England, it has been reasonably established that, in the words of Dr. Muller, "there is no scientific basis for the conclusion that the socially lower classes, or technically less advanced races, really have a genetically inferior equipment." And, in a critique of such alarmist family pedigrees as that of the ill famed Kallikak clan by Dr. Goddard (to whose work Mr. Whitney refers as "sound and valuable"), T. H. Morgan caustically remarks, "It is obvious that these groups of individuals have lived under demoralizing social conditions that might swamp a family of average persons. It is not surprising that, once begun, from whatever cause, the effects may be to a large extent communicated rather than inherited."

To none of these fundamental and highly relevant objections does Mr. Whitney seriously attend. True, he avoids extreme dogmatism in his discussions of insanity, epilepsy and certain other psychopathic conditions, and he warns against the danger of holding heredity responsible "for all degeneracy," conceding that the environment may in many cases make or break an undesirable genetic disposition. But these qualifications are not sufficient when set against a sustained preference for strictly biological methods in solving not only enormously complex racial problems, but a whole constellation of economic, social, educational and political problems. Decidedly the blame for their continuance is not monopolized by the tragic and numerically insignificant battalions of the mentally unbalanced.

For example: we know that upwards of 300,000 people in this country are under continuous observation and treatment in our state hospitals for the insane and feeble-minded, and that in 1928, 159 out of 165 state hospitals paid out for operation and maintenance the pretty sum of $95,244,051.

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Granting that a reduction of this dismal item is highly desirable, even if obtained through the stop-gap methods of eugenic control, how does it compare with the following: a 1933 national accident bill of $2,000,000,000 and 89,500 deaths; 1933-34 outlays for "national defense" through army and navy of over a billion dollars; R.F.C. loans to ailing industry of $587,310,695 in the one month of December, 1933; a decrease of wages paid out in selected major industries of over eight billion dollars (or 60 percent) in the period 1929-32 and a rise in aggregate net income of 400 industrial companies from $69,000,000 in 1932 to $558,000,000 in 1933? How much of our total yearly expenditure on the feeble-minded, insane and mental defectives could be met from the $73,000,000 estate of the late George F. Baker, the $83,000,000 1933 net profits of United States Steel, or an estimated total cost of New Deal tinkerings with the depression (excluding the R.F.C.) of $11,750,000,000?

It is proper to ask if any of these Gargantuan outlays have substantially contributed to "race betterment" in this country, or whether it will be seriously maintained that 16,000—or 16,000,000—sterilizations will conjure away the problems of: 5,500,000 children on relief throughout the country and a 20-percent incidence of child malnutrition; an increase in the rate of admissions to New York State hospitals for the insane of 65.3 per 100,000 to 84.7 (a record high) in the period 1910-33; a rise in the number of families on relief in the New York City area of from 20,000 in 1929 to over 300,000 in 1934, together with an 83-percent increase in illness directly traceable to the depression; a national housing shortage of close to a million dwellings, and a rise in the percentage of the destitute from 1.2 to 1929 to 11.43 in 1932.

Mr. Whitney, who cannot be ignorant of such facts as the above, and of whose humane intentions there can be no doubt, nevertheless complains that "current talk has not yet touched on a far more important need of contemporary life . . . if it is to stay firm. I mean a eugenic program." And he puts the leading questions, "Where are we heading? Where do we want to go?"

Granting with him, under reservations, that "a planned society must imply the regulation of births"; admitting that we have traces of impure biological sediment in our population whose removal depends upon intelligent scientific appraisal and far-sighted medical procedures: admitting, in fact, that the professed eugenic ideal is logically unassailable—we have still, and emphatically, to challenge the class bias, ethnic prejudices, moral irrelevancies and economic prevarication that the eugenists (the word may pass here) *inherited* from their predecessors—faults that not only compromise the integrity of this ideal but draw the fire of scientists and simple citizens regarding its value in practice.

Sterilization, whether compulsory, as reported from Germany, or voluntary, as in Denmark, Switzerland, Canada and the United States, is to the general complex of social problems what a delayed operation upon a malignant cancer is to the underlying, and still unknown, etiology of that disease. At best it should be regarded as an auxiliary weapon in the struggle with social maladjustment, and then only in cases where biological or genetic determinants can be clearly proved. At worst the operation is merely a device to circumvent penalties—large families, inadequate housing and slum conditions, concentration of wealth, unemployment and steadily decreasing standards of living—which cannot by any stretch of the imagination or violence of logic be laid at the door of even 6,000,000 feeble-minded. To claim for any strictly "eugenic program," however carefully thought out and honestly applied, that it will bring about really fundamental and enduring improvements in our present society is like putting new water pipes in a house to eliminate a poison continually supplied to the reservoirs. To ask, as Mr. Whitney does in all seriousness, "Is it not better to weed out types of mind that have low breaking points, and encourage the types that can stand all kinds of mental strain without succumbing?" is not only to make gratuitous assumptions regarding the immense plasticity of the human organism but actually to admit that human life, under conditions that promise unexampled comfort and security for the average man and woman, must be prepared to accept and quietly tolerate every possible extreme of suffering, mental and physical.

And just what are we to conclude from the further statement that, "We do ask that he [the street-sweeper] spring from racially adequate germ-plasm, and pass that germ-plasm along to all the little street-sweepers he fathers"? Not the most convinced Parsee or caste-conscious Hindu could express a more extreme chauvinism than occurs in these words from one of America's best known and most respected social scientists. The dilemma of eugenics stands there in all its bleak insistence. Once more it is Lancelot Hogben who has stated it most effectively, in summing up a discussion on genetic principles:

> To the writer it seems that the selfishness, apathy and prejudice which prevent intellectually gifted people from understanding the character of the present crisis in civilization is a far greater menace to the survival of culture than the prevalence of mental defect in the technical sense of the term.

HAROLD WARD.

Sage and Savage

To hold the dignity of race,
And shrink in bony weakness.
To keep a furrowed putty-face,
Unconscious of its bleakness—

Let naked savage shun like drouth
These sapient insane

Who shrivel in a honeycomb of brain.

LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY.

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The Funeral of the R.A.P.P.

Mr. Gessner's account of the first All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, held in Moscow last August, is especially interesting in view of the fact that a congress of left-wing writers is about to be held in this country. The American Writers' Congress begins on Friday evening, April 26, with a public meeting in Mecca Temple, in New York City.—THE EDITORS.

THEY CAME from all over the Union, the delegates to the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers. They came from Siberia and from Central Asia and from the Caucasus; some wore their native costumes and walked in long robes and colored skull caps, like Aini, the Uzbek poet. They mingled their odd syllables, the languages of their national minorities, into a harmonious voice that is destined to change the character not only of contemporary Soviet literature but of other revolutionary literatures as well.

This new tone pitch for Red literature was sounded some time before (April 23, 1932) by the death knell over the R.A.P.P., the Association of Proletarian Writers. Not since that bureaucratic organization was liquidated has there been a bugle call sounding the character for new Soviet letters. The change that has been coming over Soviet life during the past few years best explains the change that has taken place in literary policy. Life in the cities and in the country has become much easier; Moscow is rapidly being westernized in outward appearance. Rising out of this well earned relaxation, however, is the increasingly defined culture of the proletarian masses. And the Writers' Congress can best be approached from the standpoint of the working-class crowd that gathered every day outside the House of the Trade Unions in Moscow.

It was not a curiosity crowd. There probably was not a fountain-pen among these people. They did not suggest the Hollywood crowds outside the Brown Derby café. They did not come to see a literary star or an esthetic creator of abstract beauty. They were there simply to catch a glimpse of the men who were writing about *them*. They were the heroes of the books that these authors had been writing; they, workers on their way home from factories, metro *udarniks* from across the street where they had been digging Moscow's subway. Standing among them you got the opposite feeling from that of an American sight-seeing crowd. Rather, coming out of the hall at night after a session, you did the rubbernecking. These, here, overcrowding the sidewalk, blocking the street, were the characters in the flesh with whom the discussion had been concerned.

During the Congress they formed ranks from the street and entered the Congress as delegations. Authors met their characters, and the characters sized up the authors. Once in a while a healthy, reproving voice was heard from them: "Come and live among us before you write. You don't pay as much attention to us as you should."

This general criticism was not applicable to all the writers, least of all the newest and youngest. These are the Soviet writers of tomorrow, the voices in the shock-brigade delegations. They write the wall newspapers and the booklets of the factories; they are soldiers in the ranks of the proletariat. Characteristic of them were the Young Pioneers from Siberia. They thought their life in Siberia so interesting that a book should be written about it, and since no author had yet undertaken the job they decided to do it themselves. The result was a collective book called "The Camp of the Snub-Noses." The spokesman of the young writers' collective, a girl of fourteen, addressed the Congress: "Help us with your skill, older writers, and we will be able to help you also!"

Maxim Gorky sat as the godfather of the Congress. He had in the press praised the work of these young collective writers. In the course of his speech he again spoke in favor of collective writing. "We must teach one another," he said. "To teach means to exchange experiences. Writers who separate themselves from the life of the people will run an abortive career."

In the discussion that followed Gorky's speech Ilya Ehrenbourg came out for individual writing and against collective writing. He explained his separation from the Soviet Union (he lives in Paris) by saying that living abroad gives him a perspective on Moscow. Ehrenbourg's disagreement with Gorky was of little surprise to anyone at the Congress. Throughout the sessions there was spontaneity in the discussions, which were marked by the utmost frankness. Such an atmosphere would have been impossible as late as 1931, when the R.A.P.P. was still functioning.

When Karl Radek spoke, the magnificent Hall of Columns was overcrowded. He was to continue where Gorky stopped, that is, he was to characterize the international literature of today. In his discussion of James Joyce, about whose work there is now much talk among certain Russian writers, Radek contrasted Joyce's realism with socialist realism. He advised against learning from Joyce because "his purpose as an artist is to photograph a pile of manure through a microscope with the help of a film apparatus." Against this highly personalized realism, Radek advocated a realism "we call social-

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ist because it does not merely photograph life. It is based on an understanding of the direction in which the world is going. The world is heading toward the victory of socialism."

Suspended on all four sides from the marble columns above Radek's head were portraits of Shakespeare, Spenser, Homer, Dante, Molière, Balzac, Heine, Goethe, Pushkin, Gogol and Chekhov. At first I was surprised to see these faces so prominently displayed; it did not agree with what I had heard about the attitude of revolutionary writers toward the bourgeois past. But Radek invoked the past and measured it against the future. "No," he said, "we do not suppress Shakespeares, we encourage them. We will create a literature greater than that of the Renaissance."

All the great writers of Europe, especially Shakespeare and Balzac, are now being studied with interest because they were eminently truthful. But the Soviet writers are not satisfied with non-social-minded truthfulness. The truthfulness of socialist realism is to them a more conscious and consistent truthfulness because it is firmly grounded in the outlook of the revolutionary working class. This is the one great theme of the Congress: Socialist Realism. It is also the main plank of the Writers' Union, organized as a result of the sessions that continued for two weeks. The plank of the Union, in brief, is that "we don't care what you write or how you write it so long as it is socialist realism."

The effect of Karl Radek's call for creation based on socialist realism will be noticed among the revolutionary writers in bourgeois countries as well. The foreign delegates present at the Congress felt this, but were perturbed by Radek's omissions in discussing the revolutionary literatures in their countries. Frederick Wolff, whose play, "The Sailors of Cattaro," was produced here last winter, discussed writers and activities that Radek failed to mention. W. Herzfelde, editor of Die Neuen Deutschen Blätter, spoke of the exiled writers' activities in Prague and elsewhere. Theodor Plivier, German revolutionary writer, devoted careful attention to the works that Radek overlooked.

In reporting on American revolutionary literature I was compelled to join my voice with those of the Germans. Of all the names Radek could have mentioned, let alone discuss, he listed only Becker and Gold. He failed to mention two new literary forces working for the proletariat in America: the Theatre Union and The New Masses. I found that the Soviet writers still thought of our contemporary revolutionary writers in terms of Dreiser-Anderson-Sinclair-Dos Passos. Of Conroy, Cantwell, Lumpkin they had not heard; nor of writers like Erskine Caldwell and Josephine Herbst who have been approaching American life from a revolutionary standpoint. Radek in his reply said in effect: "You are not so important as you think you are." There have been, he meant, left-wing writers who considered the revolutionary movement of the proletariat as revolving around themselves.

The contrast between the problems of a revolutionary artist in a bourgeois country and those of a Soviet writer was visible to all foreign delegates. At the Congress one realized that it is no longer necessary for Soviet writers to launch direct attacks against bourgeois ideas, because the bourgeoisie is no longer in power. Instead, Soviet writers are redirecting their themes, and the path hewn by Lenin is broadening into the vast panorama of socialist construction. André Malraux summarized this point by saying that Soviet writers are fortunate in being able to write for the proletariat, while in other countries revolutionary writers are still compelled to write against the bourgeoisie.

The last evening of the Congress was a gigantic banquet for the delegates that was a Soviet achievement in itself. Amid the gayety of this Russian wake over the corpse of the R.A.P.P., I saw Gorky sitting quietly at a littered table. In his abrupt manner he summarized for me the whole two weeks of sessions. Looking at me down his long cigarette holder, he said: "Let's not talk so much about our books, but write them." ROBERT GESSNER.

Me and the Babe

A Story

IT IS late at night and I am walking on Broadway, but on account of Broadway being the Great White Way it does not seem as late as it is. The lights are all burning and the streets are jammed with taxis and the sidewalks flow with people. I see one sign that has more electric lights in it than a lot of towns I know and the taxis are honking their horns and the show girls are going home with the make-up still on their faces and I am surprised to find out they are not all blondes. It is not unusual for me to be walking on Broadway because I am new to New York and want to find out what the town is like and Broadway is a good place to begin.

One of the things I notice on Broadway is that it is hard to get into conversations with people. I am not the sort of person who goes around trying to get into conversations with people, but night after night I see the same guys standing before the cigar stores and dance halls and I get the idea I would like to know what kind of guys they are. They look different from any guys I have known, they have different kinds of faces, and I would like to know where they were born and what they do in the daytime and why it is they spend every night in the same place. One or two I know are in the fight racket, which I can tell by the shape their noses are in, but the others I can't figure out at all.

That is why it is that after I have seen them five or six times running I begin to say hello. I am very friendly when I say hello, but I find out it does not

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go over. They do not turn out to be what you would call the friendly type, and since they look at me like I had just jumped over the wall of some asylum I soon learn to keep what I have heard referred to as my peace. I begin to think they are underworld characters that the cops are after, but it does not sound convincing even to me because if they were on the limb they would not be sitting out where it could be sawed off from under them. So I give it up as a bad job and conclude they are too busy to say hello to everybody that passes. I am disappointed but I do not stay away from Broadway on that account.

Now on this night I am telling about, when I have gotten to know better than to go around saying hello, I am standing on the curb reading the news flashes that crawl around the Times Building. I am reading that the Babe has left for Boston when I feel a tap on my shoulder. I look around and there is one of the guys. I have not seen him before but I know he is one of the guys because he has that kind of face and the same kind of clothes. He has on a double-breasted gray suit and a pearl-gray hat and his blue tie matches the handkerchief in his coat. He looks like he has not been up long because he has just shaved himself and you can see the nicks the razor made on his chin.

"Howrya," he says, telescoping the three words into a single sound, and working his mouth into what I take as a smile. I have just gotten used to the idea that Broadway is not a friendly street and so I can think of nothing to say to him. We stand there looking at each other and I notice some gold fillings in his teeth and then he says "Howrya" again. When he says it I catch a whiff of his breath and then I understand why he is so friendly.

"I'm O.K.," I say, not forgetting to talk like I am on Broadway. "How are you?"

"I'm at the top," he says. "Haven't I seen you somewheres before?"

"Maybe," I answer. "I spend a lot of time walking up and down."

"Oh." He looks at me hard. "I guess I have made a mistake. I thought I had seen you somewheres else except just walking up and down. I would have sworn you were the man who said he was going to buy my watch off of me."

"No," I say. "You are mistaken. I have not promised to buy a watch off of no one."

"That is too bad for you," he answers. "It is a very fine watch."

He takes it out of one of the pockets in his vest and holds it out on the palm of his hand.

"You will not have another chance to buy a watch like this at the price I am going to offer it to you."

"I am not in the market for a watch," I say to him. "How is the Babe going to do with Boston?"

"The Babe is a great guy," he replies. "It is a pity his legs got old before the rest of him. I will sell you this watch for twenty-five dollars. It is a real bargain. I would not sacrifice it at such a price except that I have had a lot of bad luck and I need the money. It is yours for twenty-five."

I am not interested in the watch because I have already lost two of them, but I cannot explain this to the guy though. More letters crawl around the Times Building and I see that Boston is getting ready to give the Babe a big reception.

"I hope the Babe comes through with Boston," I say.

"The Babe is a great guy. He is a prince of a fellow. I know him personal. It is too bad his legs went and folded up on him. If you do not buy this watch you are missing the chance of a lifetime. It is worth seventy-five dollars at least."

"I can tell that by looking at it," I answer, even though it looks like an ordinary watch to me and I am no judge of watches anyway. "It looks like a very fine watch."

"I am glad you appreciate a good watch when you see it. You will never have a chance to make a bargain like this. If I did not have so much bad luck I would not be selling it at such a sacrifice. It is worth seventy-five dollars any day of the week but I will sell it to you for twenty-five. Is that a bargain or is it a bargain?"

"It is a bargain," I reply.

"You have said it. It is a pleasure to meet up with a man who knows a bargain when he sees one. This watch is a watch you can be proud of. I am proud of it myself and I would not be selling it except for the hard luck I have had lately. If I don't get twenty-five dollars by morning I will be thrown out of my rooms."

"That is too bad," I say, watching the news flashes again. "I am very sorry to hear that indeed. Tell me more about the Babe. I have always wanted to meet up with a friend of his."

"The Babe is a great guy. He is a prince. If his legs had not gone back on him he would still be at the top. The next time he is in town I will arrange for you and him to meet. I know the Babe like I know my own brother. Are you going to buy this watch?"

"How long have you known the Babe? Do you and he come from the same town."

"I do not know what town the Babe is from and I am not from that town anyway."

"What town are you from?"

"The town I am from is so small it is not even on the map. Even if I told you its name you would not know it. I am waiting to hear if you are going to buy this watch. I have to get hold of twenty-five dollars or I am going to get thrown out of my rooms."

"I have been around this country a lot," I answer, "and I think that maybe I might know the town you are from. What is the name of the town? My town is Franklin, Louisiana. What is yours?"

"I ran away from my town when I was a small boy and I do not like to talk about it. I do not like to even think about it. Why are you so anxious to know where I come from? I did not ask you any questions about where you come from. I only asked you if you wanted to buy a watch. You will never have another chance to buy a fine watch like this for twenty-five dollars."

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"I do not have twenty-five dollars," I answer. "I do not even have five dollars. All I have is two dollars and forty cents. It is near the end of the month. Do you think the Babe will come back?"

"I know the Babe personal and he is a great guy but I don't have time to spend all night talking about him. I am sorry you only have two dollars and forty cents. I can't sell this watch for that because it would be too big a sacrifice. I am willing to make a sacrifice but not as big a sacrifice as that. Maybe you can get the twenty-five and meet me later."

"I could not get the twenty-five even if I was going to be thrown out of my rooms."

"That is too bad. You are missing a real bargain. This is a very fine watch."

We have both run out of conversation and then I notice an old fellow standing a few yards down the curb. He has on a pair of rimless spectacles and his hat sits up on the top of his head and in his hand he holds an umbrella even though it is a fine evening and there is no sign of rain. The guy I am talking with sees him the same time I do.

"I have to go," he says. "There is the man who said he would buy the watch off of me."

I look at the man and then I look at him.

"Didn't you say you thought I was the man who said he would buy your watch? Does that old grandpa and me look like each other?"

"I see you think you are a smart guy," he answers. "I do not like smart guys. I do not like guys who go around trying to find out the name of my town neither. The name of my town is my own business."

He walks off and goes up to the old fellow with the umbrella and starts a conversation with him. They talk for a little while and then the guy takes hold of the old fellow's arm and they walk off and are lost in the crowd. I look at the news flashes and they say that the Babe has sent a farewell message to New York and Broadway. The Babe is very sad to have to leave New York, but the day of parting has come. I hope the Babe makes out all right with Boston. I hear he is a great guy.

HAMILTON BASSO.

Yellow Pertains to Killing

Rustle-rustled the breeze straight from the moon,
And the moon struck yellow in the hunter's lifting eyes.
Were saber-tooth tigers yellow? No hides persist,
But Bengal tigers are in half their stripes,

And lions are yellow, and leopards and jaguars are,
And jackals snarling in African village fight.
And the round spot circling and curving over the grass.
From a flashlight to bolster the glow of the moon tonight.

Yellowish strips that snap like rubber bands
Are night-crawlers seized when the neighbors lie in bed
By the hunter's hands tanned yellow, meant to lure
Small trout to die—that are spotted with killing red.

W. R. MOSES.

Washington Notes

Cordell Hull—The Man and His Method—Tariffs and Treaties—Congressional Sargasso—No Spark Makes No Fire

IN THE midst of the almost terrifying confusion that characterizes so much of this administration and that now seems to be infecting the congressional leadership, it is somewhat of a relief to contemplate the steady, unwavering manner in which one man presses toward his objective, refusing to be distracted or diverted from his course. I refer, of course, to the Honorable Cordell Hull, Secretary of State. Whether you agree with Mr. Hull's policy or not, it seems to me you must admire his calm in the midst of so much excitement and contrast the common-sense steadfastness of his course with the general instability.

It is true, I think, that Mr. Hull is not of the "inner White House circle" and that he is not called into consultation on general domestic policies. It is true, too, that he does not obtrude his views at Cabinet meetings and never interferes in matters that do not concern his own department. On the other hand, more than one of Mr. Roosevelt's associates has discovered that Mr. Hull cannot be pushed aside on an issue that concerns him. More than once he has had his way with the President in a controversial matter, not because of the weight of his arguments but by reason of his sheer persistence. Not a brilliant man, rather sluggish in his mental reactions, but solid and immovable when he takes a stand, the Secretary of State has a reputation for integrity and respectability that is something of an asset to the administration and very much of an asset to himself in every fight he has had.

No one, so far as I can recall, has ever regarded Mr. Hull as a liberal or a progressive. No one believes that he is a New Dealer at heart or that he originates the foreign policy of the administration in its larger aspects. What is maintained, however, and what is undoubtedly true, is that he has molded the tariff policy and has forced the administration in his direction, in spite of the fact that some of Mr. Roosevelt's most influential advisers did not want to go that way. All of which is to call attention to the not generally appreciated fact that, in the controversy now existing between him and Mr. George Peek, the President's special foreign-trade adviser, the best posted belief is that Mr. Hull will have his way, through the very effective means of taking it. He will be allowed to have it largely because of White House recognition of the impossibility of changing Mr. Hull's views on the subject of tariff regulations or lessening his pressure on Mr. Peek.

There is not, I think, a very clear idea of the differences between Mr. Hull and Mr. Peek in the matter of these reciprocal tariff treaties, of which the State Department has already negotiated four—Belgium, Brazil, Cuba and Haiti—and of which some fifteen to eighteen are pending. The Canadian treaty is, I understand, on the verge of going through. As a matter of fact, the differences between the Messrs Hull and Peek are not so very great. The purpose of the treaties, of course, is to promote foreign trade by a reciprocal lowering of the tariffs on specific items. So far as that is concerned, Mr. Peek is in accord with Mr. Hull.

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It is in the matter of the application of the most-favored-nation treaty that they differ. Mr. Hull, for example, insists that after he has negotiated a treaty with one nation, agreeing upon a mutually lowered tariff on specified items, any other nation desiring to do business with us on the same terms may automatically enjoy the same tariff rates on the same items, provided there is no discrimination against us.

As I understand it, Mr. Peek is with Mr. Hull so far as trading is concerned, but does not agree in the most-favored-nation application. He believes that the bargain should be confined to the two countries and that its advantages should not be open to the rest of the world. He thinks there should be no automatic application simply on a basis of non-discrimination. He wants to bargain with one nation at a time and keep the other nations out. There are one or two other minor points upon which the views of the two men diverge and there is not much chance of getting them together, because I am revealing no secret when I say that Mr. Peek is almost as "sot" in his ways as Mr. Hull. The latter, however, has the advantage in prestige, power and position. He also has the advantage of knowing that if matters ever get to a showdown, the President will support him rather than Peek.

As to the commercial value of these treaties, I should say it is impossible accurately to judge for at least a year. The estimate is that the four already negotiated will not run into much money. The Brazil bargain, I am told, should increase our export business with that nation by from five to seven million dollars. The treaty with Belgium may increase it by eighteen millions. The Canadian treaty would be larger still. Lump them all together, and, while the total may not be stupendous, it will certainly not be insignificant. So much for the business value.

As for the just as real though less tangible policy side, I think the gain there is considerable. It may be small, but at least we are making some dent in the wall built up on this side by a succession of high-tariff Republican administrations, which forced the erection of equally high walls against us and resulted not only in losing the nations' good will but in strangling world trade. We have not accomplished much so far, but most people will agree that even a little lowering of the walls is internationally beneficial.

There have been few political or legislative developments here in the past week. Since the President's return from his vacation on the Astor yacht, an effort has been made to inject enough force into the congressional leadership to improve the rather discouraging state of the administration program, the only part of which to pass after nearly three months of continuous session is the work-relief bill. That, to be sure, is the most important part, but it is by no means all. There seems reason to believe that some speed will be shown on the House side pretty soon in the matter of the social-security bills, the holding-company bill and one or two others. But no means of speeding the Senate into action on the N.R.A., Wagner labor-board bill or anything else seems yet to have been evolved.

One of the troubles with the administration program in the Senate is the general knowledge that the Senate leadership, while loyal, sincere and industrious, is not at heart convinced of the wisdom of the administration bills. This does not mean that these Senate leaders do not put every ounce of their strength behind the President's proposals. It does mean that there is general recognition that they give this support for personal, party and political reasons rather than from any belief in the righteousness of the measures or the soundness of the policies. There is no inner fire of conviction in them. Lacking that, the leadership is not so effective as it might be.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Employees Who Are Tsars—Small Stakes and Big Bonuses—Disaffected Democrats—Business and the N.R.A.

IT WAS not surprising that Mr. Leonor F. Loree, the grizzled old gift of the middle ages to American industry, should have protested against filing with the Securities Exchange Commission the salaries paid to the officers and managers of the Delaware and Hudson Company. But it was surprising and a little disappointing that the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey should have refused to furnish this information. Whatever anyone may think of the Rockefeller millions and methods, and particularly the relations of the Standard Oil companies with competitors in the past, the fact remains that, taken by and large, they have been far in advance of most other companies in their relations with their stockholders and in their management ethics. Loree represents all the things that the new order looks upon with scorn as the product of the old order in business. He hates democracy, labor, reformers, governments that think they have a right to restrain the captain of industry. He was acting in perfect conformity with his philosophy when he objected to telling what he was getting.

Yet both these companies should be made to disgorge this information promptly. A glance at the facts about the stake of the managers in the businesses they run reveals the necessity for this.

There are 515,000 shares of stock in the Delaware and Hudson Company, which controls the Delaware and Hudson Railroad and is the largest stockholder in the New York Central Railroad. Mr. Loree, who is the Tsar of the company, owns ten shares of stock and all the officers and directors put together own only 1,097 shares. This is about one-fifth of one percent of the stock of the company. The Standard Oil of New Jersey has outstanding over 25,000,000 shares. The officers and directors own 96,533 shares. This is something more than one-third of one percent.

The small stake of these men in the actual ownership of these companies is altogether out of proportion to the power they wield. They are mere employees, and the sooner they learn that they are employees and nothing else the better it will be for everybody—stockholders, labor and the public. When the eminent Mr. Charles Schwab was hauled over the coals about the huge bonuses paid to himself, Grace and others, he said to newspapermen that he supposed he hadn't realized "that the damned old company didn't belong to him." It didn't indeed. And it is high time that realization got around among the Lorees, Teagles *et al.*

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On a visit to Washington the most interesting phenomenon I found was the state of mind in the House of Representatives. Up to now that body has been a kind of servants' hall for the White House. The New Yorker magazine reports a letter from a subscriber to an agricultural paper asking for a remedy for his chickens. He had 150 in the flock, all afflicted with a strange disease which made them shake their heads from side to side as if they were saying "no" in unison. Had they been shaking them a little differently—up and down instead of sideways—they might easily have been mistaken for the Democratic majority. But it is now perfectly obvious that the members are getting very tired of this complacent yessing. The House is on the verge of revolt. The grumbling, sneering at the administration and the bosses, the complaints and criticisms go on endlessly in the corridors and the cloakroom. Nothing is lacking for an outbreak save a leader among the disaffected Democrats. If one such strong man were to rise in the House and boldly throw off the yoke in a speech of defiance and denunciation the House would be in an uproar of rebellion.

If this does happen, the plight of the administration will be rather difficult. It is without any real leaders in that body. Bankhead, the majority leader, is ill, and Taylor, the acting leader, is maladroit and in trouble continually. The heads of the two great committees—Appropriations and Ways and Means—are hopelessly weak. The flare-up on the war-profits measure was an indication of what can happen. That was a revolt. The ways were greased to put that measure through. It was saved by the complete surrender of the leaders to the rebels and the amendment of the bill so that the Senate might deal with its fiscal features.

The most amazing recent piece of propaganda—the brassiest in my observation—is that carried on by the N.R.A. to make the people believe it is fighting the battle of the little man and labor against business and that business is trying to kill the N.R.A., particularly big business. Business is making a heroic effort to save the N.R.A. It doesn't like Section 7a, but it has learned that Section 7a doesn't mean anything. Hence it is willing to accept that for the sake of the other powerful weapons put in its hands—the right to make laws for the control of industry and to control production. As for price fixing, business, particularly big business, realized, as one of its greatest friends points out, that it need not worry about price fixing as long as it does the fixing and if it can control production. If it can produce a scarcity in its industries, prices will take care of themselves. The public eye has perhaps not noticed the report of what is called the Industrial Advisory Committee of the Department of Commerce, that rare collection of birds which, under Secretary of Commerce Roper's hospitality, has been roosting in the Department since the New Deal began and "weaving," according to Mr. Roper, "the future economic pattern of the country." It is composed of such noble New Dealers as Myron Taylor, Alfred Sloan, Gerard Swope, H. I. Harriman and numerous others of the same school. It has now sent a petition to Congress urging Congress not to put an end to the N.R.A. How, in the face of facts like these, can the pretension be carried on that business is opposed to the N.R.A.?

JOHN T. FLYNN.

On the Labor Front

Strange Bedfellows—Two Opinions from Many —Preparing for War in Akron—Will There Be a Strike?

OPPOSITION to Senator Wagner's labor-disputes bill has produced a curious, not to say incongruous, alignment. Both the right and the left are attacking its provisions, though of course for slightly different reasons. It would appear, however, that the opposition of the right—of which the steel and automobile employers are the most vociferous—could be rather easily dissolved by one judiciously placed amendment. For while the spokesmen for industry, broadly speaking, have denounced the bill as wholly unacceptable, what really worries them is the clause that would prohibit employers from coercing or interfering with the free organization of their employees. If that clause were to be amended to prohibit coercion on the part of *anyone* (including labor organizers), the employing interests might then find the bill acceptable. For such an amendent, obviously, would hamstring the unions.

To left-wing labor leaders the chief danger in Senator Wagner's bill is not simply a matter of phraseology. Their criticism is of a more fundamental sort. They challenge the whole concept of governmental interference in labor disputes. They fear that governmental agencies, such as the proposed labor board, will be used to break or prevent strikes and will be unable, because of employer pressure on the government, to serve labor fairly. The American Civil Liberties Union, which can hardly be classified as left-wing, takes this view in urging the defeat of the bill. Employer pressure on any governmental industrial agency, it points out, is "so constant and determined that it is far better to have no governmental intervention than to suffer the delusion that it will aid labor in its struggle for the rights to organize, bargain collectively and strike." Certainly labor's experience with governmental boards during the past two years supports, in large measure, this view, as it does the conclusion of the Civil Liberties Union that "only unions militant enough and strong enough to withstand many pressures have been able to achieve anything like an unrestricted exercise of their rights."

In passing, it is interesting to note that the Periodical Publishers' Institute, representing the leading magazine publishers of the country, has discovered a menace in the Wagner bill that even the alert steel and automobile manufacturers overlooked. In a special memorandum to its members it predicts that passage of the bill might result in the unionization of between eighteen and twenty million workers. Their union dues, it estimates somewhat liberally, would produce an annual revenue "somewhere between $400,000,000 and $500,000,000 a year, which is a colossal sum to place at the disposal of one bloc of our population and which obviously could be used as a basis for tremendous political and social pressure for the benefit of this one group as against the balance of the citizens of the country." The Institute, of course, quite casually neglects to point out that this colossal sum (when, as and if collected) would not begin to approach the almost unlimited

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resources, not to speak of militia, police and publisher support, that the employers ("the balance of the citizens of the country") now have at their disposal in fighting labor.

The threatened rubber strike in Akron, Ohio, must be regarded as a crucial test for the United Rubber Workers' Union. For it must either win recognition by this threat or by striking, or suffer a decimation in its ranks comparable to that which the automobile unions experienced after they failed to gain any concessions from the automobile companies. Yet it appears that the strike has been abandoned —at least by the A.F. of L. leaders of the union. That is the chief significance of the "truce" signed in Washington last week between them and the rubber companies. The agreement does not give the union recognition; it merely promises conferences between the employers and the "chosen representatives of any group of employees." Moreover, it permits the employers to delay the official choosing of representatives for perhaps as much as a year's time by appealing the election order of the National Labor Relations Board to the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, strikes are to be outlawed.

The rubber workers may, of course, overrule their leaders and strike, but whether they can win recognition is uncertain. The "big three"—Goodyear, Goodrich and Firestone—are well prepared to resist collective bargaining. They have, according to press dispatches, fortified their plants "with barbed wire, window bars, sand bags and miles of bare copper wire capable of carrying death-dealing electric current." In addition, 1,000 deputies, specially trained for strike duty, stand by.

A year ago, it is generally agreed, a strike would have been successful in unionizing the industry 100 percent. At that time nearly three-fourths of the rubber workers were members of the union and eager to force the employers to give them recognition. The A.F. of L. leadership, however, vetoed the idea of militant action and counseled the workers to rely on negotiation and the help of the labor boards. The efforts at negotiation were, of course, futile gestures and so disillusioning that a rank-and-file movement nearly took the leadership of the United Rubber Workers away from Mr. Coleman Claherty, whom William Green had sent to Akron as organizer and who is now president of the union. Mr. Claherty succeeded in putting down the revolt—at the expense, however, of losing the support of many union members. The present membership—12,000—is less than half what it was and represents only about one-third of the Akron rubber workers.

Last week 9,000 seamen on the Pacific Coast won a reduction in working hours and increases in the rate of pay, ranging from 5 to 33 percent. This award was made by an arbitration board established last summer, following the great marine strike. There is an impression, widely held, that the strike of seamen and longshoremen, which culminated in the general strike in San Francisco, was completely lost. This is erroneous. The longshoremen finally won nearly all of their demands and were successful in breaking employer control of the "hiring halls." In the present award, the employers' "hiring hall" is also abolished, thus removing an agency that has long been used to blacklist union workers. WILLIAM P. MANGOLD.

Men Working

THIS LAST Warner picture, "Black Fury," has not got the subject of strikes reduced to final terms (in fact its strike is a phoney, its villains are not the actual owners at all), but still it is the most powerful strike picture that has yet been made—so far as I am aware, and I am aware of the better known Soviet jobs in the field. Pudovkin has produced the most massive and beautiful works of this kind; but even his best film, "Mother," was lacking in the suppleness of personal development, the direct and hard-hitting action where action is needed, that are required to give a picture its air of easy continuous motion and real life, and to sway its audiences.

"Black Fury" has this motion and this air of life, whatever we may think of its social content (and from the row being kicked up on several sides, we may think some very thoughtful things indeed). As to story, "Black Fury" goes into a mining patch, below-ground into the mines where the men are working, and it sets up most of its drama in the Hunky character of Joe Radek (Paul Muni), who is tumbled out of his great boisterous content with the world by his girl's desertion and then tricked into bringing on trouble within his union, fumbling along, leading the men into a strike that is a set-up for the strike-breaking agency behind it. Scabs, beatings, evictions, all of the men turning against Radek. To say that the whole matter is settled by Radek's getting off a hospital bed and shutting himself up in the mine with dynamite enough to blow it to pieces, does not do justice to what the picture has been broadening into all this time—something more than an action piece, something more than a spectacle, something powerful and, by virtue of the contagious excitements peculiar to its form, very strange.

It may not be taken as the study of a typical strike: it does not show why strikes are generally made, or even how. It is a story of the suffering in the life of a single man—his betrayals, the battering of his poor muddy wits, the unquenchability of his vigor and loyalties. To this story certain conditions of life in a striking town are essential; it derives its force and persuasion from the fine tangible way in which these conditions are built up around plot situations and brought to bear on the central figure. And because this central figure is made dominant and real, laying a strong hand on his audience, including it in his humiliations and rough and tumble victories, all these incidents will be seen through his eyes and taken at his valuation.

I have not space for the various elements that actively contribute to the general effect of this picture—Muni gets into his part a mixture of brawn and puzzlement and fury that is grand to see. And the whole line of direction is vivid—I mean to say that violence in this picture is not a rubber-stamp symbol; it is a thing that shrieks along a man's nerves and settles in his stomach. The word great is certainly one to be sparing of in pictures, but if it may be lavished on any half-chewed jumble of stills that comes in from abroad, then I am in favor of loosening up with it on the home product. Director Michael Curtiz and whatever combination (writers, actors, camera and sound men) working with him is responsible for the fight in the mine,

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the terrible slugging to death of little John Qualen, the strike meetings and the work below-ground, the bar scenes and such interludes as that of Radek, drunk and jolly and already betrayed by his friend, piling up to the girl's house and calling out for her before remembering her desertion—if we must talk of greatness it is about time the men responsible for a picture like this were given the inside rail, particularly since the best work in pictures anywhere in the world just now is going forward out there on the West Coast of this country, and has been for these two years or more.

OTIS FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Tax on Idle Money

SIR: Employment comes to people whenever money is spent. Money, freely moving, either for living or for investment, produces employment and prosperity. Money not freely spent or invested but held in idleness destroys employment, and economic distress comes to the people. Nothing but idle money can cause unemployment. We have bank deposits of more than $40,000,000,000, most of it unspent past incomes and most of it idle. Reëmployment cannot come until this gets in motion.

Why not levy a tax against idle money, in order to induce it to move? A tax of 1.5 percent each quarter on bank deposits in excess, say, of $1,000 would cause owners of money to use it for something, to avoid the tax, and would thus bring rapid reëmployment to all our people. To prevent evasion of the tax by hoarding, we should also have to issue a new series of currency, conspicuously dated, that would depreciate in purchasing and debt-paying value at the same rate and at the same time as the bank-deposit tax. Let's abandon federal sales and excise taxes now levied, and lay this tax here, where it will serve the double purpose of producing revenue and forcing idle money into motion.

Birmingham, Ala. JESSE A. LA RUE.

The Iron Law of Wages

SIR: John Strachey's very fine article in *The New Republic* of April 3 is, in my opinion, greatly marred by his excursion into wage theory. As he assumes to speak in the name of all Marxians, I must register my dissent.

> Moreover [says Strachey], as every Marxian knows, the capitalist economists are correct in maintaining that capitalism can work only if real wages can be prevented from rising.

This is the iron law of wages with a vengeance. Not only *do* the capitalists pay no more than subsistence wages, but *they cannot do otherwise.*

This is neither Marxian nor true. Real wages *have* increased since the days when subsistence wages as a fact gave rise to the iron law of wages as a theory. Marx, seeing the facts to be otherwise, rejected the theory which had been accepted by earlier socialists. It is surprising that so close a student of Marx as Strachey should fall into such error, and I can account for it only by his obvious difficulties with the theory of crises. This becomes clear from the passage that follows immediately upon the one just quoted, in which he says:

> I know that this runs counter to Brain Trust economics. The Brain Trusters, I dare say quite sincerely, think, or at any rate thought, that it would be possible *to solve the difficulties of capitalism* by perpetually raising real wages. [Italics mine.]

There is considerable confusion of thought involved in the identification of capitalism's ability to "solve its difficulties" (crises), and its ability to "work" while increasing real wages. The improvement of the standard of living of the workers is one thing, and the prevention of crises by continually improving this standard, quite another. I agree with Strachey that the latter is quite impossible under capitalism, but the former is a historic fact that all good Marxians should recognize. Not only on the authority of Marx, but on the greater authority of history.

Nor would the going back on Marx and flying in the face of history by reversion to the iron law of wages solve Strachey's apparently insuperable difficulties in constructing a theory of crises that would work. As Strachey himself has stated in his "The Nature of Capitalist Crisis," low wages are one of the horns of capitalism's fatal dilemma, of which "perpetually raising real wages" is the other. Capitalism "can work" with neither, if we mean by that an assurance of *continued employment.*

New York City. L. B. BOUDIN.

But Where Is Mr. Brisbane's Gorilla?

SIR: If I am in order, I would like to nominate for the champion tall-story teller of the United States the pride of California, Mr. Arthur Brisbane. Mr. Brisbane has told many whoppers during his brilliant career as a journalist, but I believe he surpassed his previous altitude records Friday, March 1, with this one:

> One hundred millions and more will live in California, champion all-year-round sun parlor of the world. Complete development of the airplane, swift flying, slow landing, transportation at nominal cost, will make available for one thousand million more Americans beautiful sites now neglected on hilltops and mountains. Twice the present population of the earth [2,000,000,000] could live comfortably and happily in the United States and will, some day.

After many years of study of the growth of numbers from fruit flies to human beings, Professor Raymond Pearl and Professor Lowell J. Reed, of Johns Hopkins University, estimate that the population of this country will reach a maximum of approximately 200,000,000 about the year 2100 A.D. Another method of approach to this problem suggested by Sloan, of the Bureau of the Census, forecasts a number slightly below that of Pearl and Reed.

Through still another method Dr. Louis I. Dublin and Dr. Alfred J. Lotka, statisticians of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, estimate a maximum population for this country of approximately 150,000,000 by the year 1980 A.D. The latest studied forecast is, I believe, that by Professor Warren S. Thompson and Professor P. K. Whelpton, authors of the population section of the report of the President's Committee on Social Trends. This forecast suggests that the population of this country will reach a maximum of approximately 135,000,000 by about 1955 A.D. Compare these figures with Mr. Brisbane's 4,000,000,000, and you will begin to appreciate the possibilities of this learned journalist as champion tall-story teller of the United States.

New York City. GUY IRVING BURCH.

About Inflation

SIR: In your otherwise laudable editorial article of March 13, "Inflation: How to Know It," appears the following statement:

> When the government borrows a lot of money, it issues a large amount of bonds and other promises to pay. The greater part of such issues is not bought by individuals and put away in safe-deposit boxes. It is bought by banks. It increases bank reserves. Thus the banks have a large basis on which to erect an expansion of loans. Government borrowing makes possible a growth of bank credit many times larger than the amount the government borrows.

This error seems to beset many commentators upon current banking and fiscal problems. The truth is that when the government, or any private individual, borrows from the banks, the reserves of the banking system as a whole are not increased one dollar. Member-bank reserves must come either from central-bank operations or from outside the banking system entirely. Rather, such borrowing increases deposits against which reserves must be held, and hence tends to wipe out rather than increase any excess reserves the banks hold.

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Only when a government borrows from the central bank, or the latter creates reserves by lending upon bonds sold to member banks, does such borrowing increase the reserves of the banks. It was in this way, in part, that the war and post-war inflations were financed. That "recovery" has not been financed in this manner is shown in that total Reserve-bank credit has not increased appreciably since the middle of 1933.

The factors that *have* increased excess reserves of member banks are several. Most important are: (1) the enormous imports of gold since the devaluation of the dollar; (2) the return of currency from hoarding; (3) the continuing liquidation of bank loans to industry and commerce; and (4) the recent purchases of silver.

The fact that excess bank reserves have now reached the fantastic height of almost two and one-half billions of dollars *in spite of* rather than because of government borrowing carries important implications concerning present financial and economic conditions and their probable future. For it indicates that savings are running strong, and that private industry, and even the deficit financing of the federal government, are not absorbing these savings as rapidly as they accrue. The very low interest rates obtaining on all obligations with a decent safety factor point in the same direction.

This correction would make it appear even more improbable than indicated in your editorial that there will be in the near future any "marked and progressive rise in commodity prices." Everything indicates that such an inflation is remote, and that the federal government by its spending program is only putting the voluntary savings of its citizens to use. This is unorthodox, perhaps, but it is not inflation.

JAMES S. EARLEY.

University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.

[We agree with Mr. Earley. We wish, however, to make clear that nothing he says throws doubt on our conclusion that "government borrowing makes possible a growth of bank credit many times larger than the amount the government borrows" and hence increases the possibility of inflation if and when recovery comes. If the Federal Reserve Banks do start buying the bonds, the reserves of member banks will be correspondingly increased.—THE EDITORS.]

Again, Huey Long

SIR: The Huey Long articles by Hodding Carter and Gerald L. K. Smith [The New Republic, February 13] have aroused me to make a few comments. The editors' note and the first article by Carter prepared me to listen to the illiterate ravings of a backwoodsman. However, when I came to balance one against the other I found the article by Smith did not fit this description while the one by Carter was not so heavy with anything but ridicule.

Press dispatches in the past always gave me the impression that Huey was in reality an Amos 'n' Andy kingfish with no ideas to help anyone but the kingfish, and that by skinning the brotherhood. This idea persisted until it became clear that the Standard Oil Company was listed among his enemies. Can Carter successfully dispute what Smith claims, that nine years ago Louisiana was a feudal state and that now the underdog is getting a break? Are the people of Louisiana supine under the rule of a dictator through fear of him or through well founded faith in his desire, determination and ability to free them from the oppressions of ill gotten wealth?

Huey may or may not have a well thought-out plan to accomplish what he promises. However, it seems clear that he has the people and a National Guard behind him. A people's dictator with the machinery of war in his possession is no doubt a bitter pill for the Standard Oil and rugged-individual dictators to swallow. I wonder if nine years ago Carter considered that a "belly laugh"?

It may be true that there has been a period when anyone who really wanted a job could get one or make one for himself. In which case there was some excuse for ridiculing a man who advocated sharing the wealth. But how about now when you have to lie to get a job and sell your soul to keep it? When it comes to fighting militarism (especially the home-grown kind) I am a militant pacifist and proud of it; but if I were a farmer and met up with a horse thief in possession of my horse would I hesitate to quarrel with him? I hope not.

Will Carter please explain how the American people can confiscate the spoils of legal robbery without the spirit of '76? Or does he claim there ain't no such animal?

Spokane, Wash. JAMES A. TOZELAND.

For Services Rendered

SIR: Many of your readers, by sending protests to the Arkansas State Legislature, aided in the recent fight to keep Commonwealth College alive. They will be interested to know that the school came through the ordeal unharmed and the reason for its survival is the fact that thousands of protests came in to the president of the Senate from all over the nation.

CHARLOTTE MOSKOWITZ, Executive Secretary.

Commonwealth College, Mena, Ark.

Bail for Political Prisoners

SIR: The drive of William Randolph Hearst, Chambers of Commerce, American Legion "Red" Committees and others against the fundamental civil liberties of the American people makes the lot of all independent individuals insecure. In the near future hundreds of protestants will be arrested and held in bail, lacking which they will remain in jail even though in the end the courts will be forced to find them innocent. To meet the need of such persons in the metropolitan district of New York, a non-partisan committee with Roger Baldwin as chairman has been set up under the title of Political Prisoners' Bail Fund. This is the only fund that serves such needs regardless of race, color or political affiliation. The fund solicits loans, returnable on demand, interest payable to the lender. Full information regarding this fund can be obtained from the Executive Secretary, Adelaide Schulkind, 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Checks for loans should be made payable to Leroy Peterson, Treasurer, and sent to the same address.

PAUL P. CROSBIE,

New York City. Chairman, Sponsoring Committee.

Extracts from Letters

PIONEER YOUTH of America, Inc., which each year sends club and camp leaders into the industrial towns of the South to help in their economic and political education, announces that this summer small salaries will be offered some of the better trained members of its staff. Inquiries should be addressed to Pioneer Youth, 69 Bank Street, New York City.

Beatrice F. Holtzer, 1 Dash Place, Riverdale, New York, is compiling an anthology of poetry by unknown poets. Contributors are not expected to put up any money and will not be required to buy copies of the book in order to have their work included. Miss Holtzer asks that contributions and inquiries be sent to the above address.

The Rocking-Horse, one of the little magazines, is having a nationwide contest to find America's worst sonnet. Any person who wishes to win this unique distinction is invited to send his entry to 820 Irving Place, Madison, Wisconsin.

Ruth Jenks, New York City, writes on behalf of the New York Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers, to report progress in the organization of farm laborers in southern New Jersey. She states that these workers, organized in the Agricultural and Cannery Workers' Industrial Union, are fighting an effort to force them to work on the large industrialized farms at wages of 15 cents an hour for men and 12½ cents for women. Many of these workers are now unemployed and on relief, and she states that an effort has been made to compel them to accept these wages under threat of having their relief cut off. The workers have held a series of wage conferences among themselves and have determined upon their own program of wages and working conditions.

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If Only

Flowers of the Forest, by John van Druten. Martin Beck Theatre, April 8, 1935.

BY REASON of the beautiful quality and divine tenderness with which Miss Katharine Cornell has come to be able to envelop a scene, and by reason of the elevation of Mr. van Druten's intention, "Flowers of the Forest" at least stands well above the usual stage. The main theme of the play concerns war, is anti-war. Whether any of it will do any good or not, only the gods of fortune know. To what extent there would be, with a new war, a repetition of the last war's nonsense—ladies kissing the ice-man because he is en route to the war and spurning a husband because he delays in giving all to civilization, sweeping statements about Belgian babies impaled on pikes—remains to be seen. Much of it would depend on what the organizations did, the newspapers said, and the more emotional politicians emoted. The fact remains, nevertheless, that Mr. van Druten's play does not ever drive through to its points. In a way, though this is rather to undervalue it, it much too often substitutes personal romance for passionate scope; and at times leaves matters private and obstetrical when they should have the winds of rigorous circumstance blowing on them, and should concern, in their main essence, matters larger than any mere single being.

The first act of "Flowers of the Forest" is admirable. It shows Mr. and Mrs. Jacklin—Naomi—in, as it were, an Indian-summer happiness—one of thos marriages rich in friendship and lean in passion, which fictionists understand so well, much better than they do passion and danger and discomfort (and meanwhile we must not forget Byron's remark about novels making a full length of romance but only a bust of marriages). The secretary—one of the lean English variety who seem, in plays at least, to mind their own business, though somewhat drably—brings in her young man, Leonard Dobie. He is doomed with tuberculosis. The secretary narrates how—out of the spaces—he has played a bit of song which the dead child of his landlady had once written. The immediate impulse, or crusade, of the young man, concerns war. He talks well, is touched with life, and his theme is that everyone who is not against war is for it, which is to say you either fight the idea of it or are nothing. Mrs. Jacklin's sister brings the letters that Richard Newton-Clare had written to Mrs. Jacklin long ago. The letters bring on the next two acts, a flash-back as the play's middle part.

The story of these acts is the usual one. There is random prejudice among the elders; there is a young lady annoyed because her lover, though he is going off to give his life for England, does not say things sufficiently anti-German; and another young woman whom a young man wants to be the mother of a son that shall survive him if he dies in battle. Then the disenchantment note—we are already familiar with that—what with the return of heroes in play after play, novel after novel, and young men on leave. The young lover is killed, we learn that in the last act, all these years after, when Naomi is married, and Mr. Moffat Johnston as the husband is playing with that almost professorial ardor and understandingness, that good taste and safe edge, of his. Then the secretary brings in her young man again; he suffers one of his attacks; the voice speaking through him is the voice of Richard Newton-Clare. We hear the last poetry Richard spoke, in the hospital where he lay dying. Through this, Naomi understands how much he loved her, and what the war did to him. The doctor comes and Leonard goes out to be examined. They presently report him better. Disease and war have by the time this moment in the play arrives been established as equivalents. The play ends with Naomi's tribute not to death but to life.

The chief trouble with Mr. van Druten's play is that, though it has a worthy theme, sincerely treated, it does not keep its attack on the main line of that theme, but allows itself to wander afield in search of scenes and pathos that belong in the story but are only incidental to the argument. Some years ago, in the teaching of drama, those early years of schools of drama in the universities, we used to hear, out of various French technicians especially, a good deal about *scènes à faire*. That meant necessary scenes. Scenes that must take place before our eyes in order that the economy of the dramatic climaxes should be perfect. That theory, doubtless, was evolved before a technique such as, for example, Chekhov's, had been put on the world's dramatic map. Meanwhile since those two developments, *scènes á faire* and the Chekhov word method, something has happened. A manner—it is too spineless to be called a method—of writing plays has developed, especially in England, that ignores both the necessary scene, the action of which will prepare the way for what is later to happen, and that heaping up and pressure of words, emotional, cumulative, which, for all real stage purposes, constitute dramatic action. The playwriting manner that I speak of does neither of these things. It runs along as if a piece of fiction were being written. It needs labor. It needs a search for finalities instead of words and chatter.

As an example of the need, or necessity, I speak of, let us take the final climactic moment in "Flowers of the Forest," that where the tuberculous young man lies on the sofa and speaks the words of the dying poet so many years before. To the play and to the heroine, it means everything; it is the final consummate glory. But, meanwhile, all that the dramatist has done to prepare for it is the passage in the secretary's first-act conversation about the young man; a passage that might have come out of a bad novel. At the time it was spoken, that bit about playing the landlady's dead child's piece could easily have been missed. In sum, there was not preparation but patter.

Another way of making the point is to say that in such plays as this Mr. van Druten neglects to create images for the respective motifs. Nothing stands out, for the very eyes to note, as both theatre and preparation.

Miss Auriol Lee's directing is good, save for a certain amount of indistinctness permitted in the first act, where many words are lost. But it seemed to me that a certain accentuation and firmness might have come from Mr. Guthrie McClintic's hand if he had been director. There is no doubt that Miss Cornell has profited by her experience in drama that has a formal beauty and requirement, "Romeo and Juliet" for instance, or even the "Lucrece." Her postures are simpler and more beautiful; her performance envelops the story and characters, and describes the final meaning of the play.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Wells in the Kremlin

I DOUBT that any other interview of the last ten years was more dramatic, more interesting as a clear statement of two positions or, in a sense, more absurdly grotesque than H. G. Wells's interview with Stalin.

They met in Moscow on July 23 of last year and talked through an interpreter for nearly three hours. Wells gives a one-sided story in the last chapter of his "Experiment in Autobiography." The official text of the interview can now be had in a pamphlet issued by International Publishers for two cents.[1] A longer pamphlet, costing fifty cents in this country, was published in London by The New Statesman and Nation. It contains both the interview and an exchange of letters in which Bernard Shaw is keener and wittier than Wells or J. M. Keynes. There is, unfortunately, no letter from Stalin. We know what Wells thinks about him; it would be instructive to hear what Stalin thinks about Wells.

The drama of their meeting lay in the contrast between two systems of thought. Stalin, with full authority, was speaking for communism, for the living heritage of Marx and Engels and Lenin. Wells is not an official figure and was speaking for himself; but he spoke with the voice of Anglo-American liberalism. Stalin represented the class-conscious proletariat of all countries. Wells claimed to represent the interests of humanity as a whole, but he actually defended the middle-class-conscious technical workers. Stalin advocated revolution and Wells argued against violence. He pictured a new world-order achieved painlessly by education and by a sudden miracle of the human spirit. Stalin was too busy creating a new order to disengage its outlines from the excavations of the Moscow subway and the scaffolding that surrounds the House of the Soviets. Furthermore, there was a contrast of age and country between the two men, Stalin representing the iron age in Russia and Wells the hopefulness and trust in the future of England before the First World War.

The burlesque quality of their meeting lay in the purpose that Wells carried to Moscow. During the spring of that year he had visited America and had been enthralled by the New Deal. Brain-Trusters familiar with his own books (these, indeed, are the source of the Brain Trust) had unfolded to him "a view of the world which seemed to contain all I had ever learned and thought." He spent an evening in the White House and decided that Roosevelt was "the most effective transmitting instrument possible for the coming of the new world order." At the same time, he perceived a striking similarity between Washington and Moscow. The two governments differed in method, but the end they sought, "a progressively more organized big-scale production, was precisely the same." Therefore he determined to bring them together. He thought, modestly, "If Stalin is as able as I am beginning to think him, then he must be seeing many things as I am seeing them." He would urge Stalin to forswear Marx, to forsake the proletariat, to forget all his outdated nonsense about class hostility, and immediately to join with Roosevelt in a united front—against what? Against nothing in the world but the "mental tangles, egocentric preoccupations, obsessions, misconceived phrases, bad habits of thought, subconscious fears and dreads and plain dishonesty in people's minds" that are today the sole obstacles standing in the way "to the attainment of universal freedom and abundance." That was his proposal. Imagine a Mohammedan missionary setting out to convince the Pope that he ought to renounce the Bible and make a pilgrimage to Mecca, after being circumcised. Then imagine Wells in the Kremlin, if you can.

Short-legged, long-waisted, smiling, armed with an ingratiatingly candid self-esteem, he makes his proclamations of faith and international good will to the interpreter, who writes them down and repeats them in Russian. Stalin, after politely asking Mr. Wells's permission to smoke, sucks at his big pipe and gives his answers slowly. Wells rushes on to new subjects. The two men are talking in different worlds, Stalin in the iron present, Wells in the golden future; there is no meeting of minds. Yet this failure to communicate is not Stalin's fault. He listens patiently, he considers everything Wells has to say and answers it point by point, without haste or condescension, exactly as if he were trying to explain the aims of the Russian revolution to a slow-witted but influential worker in the Putilov factory. Wells, on the other hand, listens hardly at all. Wells is the apostle, Wells is bearing a message, Wells is pursuing his own ideas with inexorable deafness. At the end of three hours he goes away, having forgotten nothing and learned nothing, except that Stalin cannot be liberalized.

It is an absurd situation, and it is also mildly tragic. If Wells had asked the right questions and had listened to the answers, he would not have been converted to Stalin's point of view, but at least he would have been able to measure some of his own ideas against reality. Several of the proposals he made in the tracts and novels of his middle period are now being tested in the Soviet Union. Thus, he once suggested that there ought to be a caste of Samurai, men and women who would dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to the task of guiding a new society. Membership in this caste would be voluntary and open to everyone who could meet the qualifications and the severe disciplinary tests. It is obvious that the real organization standing nearest to Wells's Samurai is the Russian Communist Party, and he might have learned how it functioned. Again, Wells has always dreamed of technically trained administrators given power to remake the world; they have some of this power under the Soviets. He has always emphasized the ideal of planning, and Stalin could have told him about some of the difficulties that must be overcome when planning is attempted on a continental scale. But Wells in the Kremlin asked no practical questions.

In recent years, such questions have ceased to concern him deeply. He has fixed his mind on the future so obstinately, he has wished and schemed and plotted so long for Utopia, that he is beginning to think it is just around the corner. "The socialist world-state," he says, "has become a tomorrow as real as today." But Wells's world-state of tomorrow will be created suddenly and without shedding blood by an Open Conspiracy of middle-class technicians. It has nothing whatever to do with the socialist state that exists today in a sixth of the world, after being violently created by a proletarian revolution. Stalin can have that real state, with all its problems; Wells would rather clutch his dream.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

[1] Marxism vs. Liberalism: An Interview Between Joseph Stalin and H. G. Wells. New York: International Publishers Company. 23 pages. Two cents.

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Intimations of Mortality

The Illusion of Immortality, by Corliss Lamont. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 304 pages. $3.

THE TITLE of this book, though fitting its contents, does not give an adequate idea of either its range or its depth. It is an extraordinarily complete and well informed discussion of the various aspects of the problem of continuing personal life after death, surveying relevant arguments from historical, scientific, social and philosophical angles. While the conclusion is that belief in immortality is an illusion and upon the whole a harmful one, the book is pervaded with a strong sense, one may say a sympathetic sense, of the things in human life that, quite apart from arguments, have created the longing for personal immortality and built up the illusion. This fact, together with its command of the literature of the subject, gives the book a freedom from the *odium theologicum* in reverse that is not always found in books taking a negative position on matters of religious controversy.

The first chapter discusses the importance of the problem. Many persons and movements allied with historic religions have made immortality more important than the existence of God, and indeed have conceived God's existence to be important chiefly as a warrant for personal continuance. The insistent fact of death, moreover, has tended to give the problem of immortality a first place in human thinking. By way of opposition to such an attitude of mind, the author emphasizes at various places throughout his book the importance—biological, psychological and social—of mortality. His position is summed up in one of the later pages: "It is best not only to disbelieve in immortality, but to *believe in mortality.*" Having stated the problem, Dr. Lamont discusses the question of the relation of body to soul or personality in its bearing on future life, bringing out with greater clearness than I have found anywhere else the inherent contradiction of religions—the tendency on the one hand to insist on the "resurrection of the body," and on the other hand to minimize the importance of the body, or else make a complete separation between body and spirit. Dr. Lamont also devotes a chapter to the discussion of the environment in which continuing life is carried on. He has no difficulty in showing that ideas of heaven have been conditioned by the cultures in which they were entertained, and makes a significant remark that strikes, I think, the keynote of the book: "What the religious liberals or modernists do is to abstract certain values and activities from the natural world and transplant them to a supernatural one." In another connection he shows the inconsistency of the argument for immortality that bases itself on the need for rectification of the ills of this life, on the futility and meaninglessness of this life without immortality, while at the same time deriving from this very mortal state all the values with which it endows a future existence.

In summing up the scientific grounds for disbelief provided by biology, psychology and medicine, the author is on ground made familiar by current discussion; but in the summary he brings out with great clearness the point already referred to, the difficulty in considering personality in heaven and hell as either immaterial or as associated with the material—a difficulty that affects also the nature of hell and heaven themselves. I have thought of only one consideration not dealt with. It may be argued, I think, that much of the current belief in immortality is not primary, but is the product of inculcation, from infancy throughout life, of the idea that persons are rewarded in heaven and punished in hell. If this is so, the waning of belief in the old theory of reward and punishment, together with increasing vagueness and dimness about both heaven and hell, is sure to lead to diminution of the importance of belief in future life. I have space to touch upon but one further point out of many in the volume, the treatment of the social aspect of the belief. The author is on solid ground when he points out the fatal back-kick inherent in the position that life here loses all ethical meaning and basis if there is not personal immortality, and again when he shows the morally and socially injurious consequences of putting practical preoccupation with another world in place of active interest in this one. Of belief in immortality more than of any other element of historic religions it holds good, I believe, that "religion is the opium of peoples." The positive position of Dr. Lamont is summed up in the statement: "No single idea, such as that of immortality, is, in my opinion, all-important; what is of supreme importance is an inclusive and integrated philosophy of life and one that places the individual in a definite relationship to both society and nature."

The candor, the informed scholarship and the positive grasp of the various aspects and implications of the problem of immortality that are demonstrated in this volume make it worthy of the serious attention of all thoughtful persons, particularly of those associated with liberal religious thought.

JOHN DEWEY.

The Men of Blasket

The Islandman, by Tomás O'Crohan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 303 pages. $2.50.

THERE is no novel that reflects Irish life and landscape as "Dead Souls" reflects Russian life and landscape, or that illustrates a particular epoch as "The Scarlet Letter" does. This is surprising, for the Irish—orally, at any rate—are good story-tellers. The traditional stories are always admirably told, and in the medieval literature one often comes on episodes that have as much movement, humor and character as if Cervantes had invented them. But only a few Irish writers have carried this oral, native tradition into writing: James Stephens has done it in his "Irish Fairy Tales," and George Moore in passages in "Ulick and Soracha" has shown what admirable use he could have made of this traditional method if he had come to it earlier in his career.

One of the merits of "The Islandman" is that it contains examples of the Irish way of narrating a story. It gets down on the page the raciness of the traditional story-teller's discourse before a witty and well versed audience. This particular story-teller, however, has exceptional material: he lives on an island; fishing, seal hunting with frequent wrecks give added incidents to his biography; when he goes to market he goes on a real adventure, crossing the sea, spending days in a novel environment. And unlike story-tellers in most parts of the country, he has access to a great store of poetry and saga; as he takes up the oars to go on a seal hunt, a line from a thousand-year-old poem comes to him naturally; the oars are for him as they were for the Ossianic poet "tough, sweet-sounding, enduring, white, broad-bladed." It is as if an English fisherman, getting into his boat, thought of a passage out of Beowulf.

The people of the Blaskets differ from the people of the Aran Islands in the fact that they are islanders only recently: pushed off the mainland by landlordism, they are

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insular for three or four generations. They are Kerry men whose songs are "the old songs of Munster" and whose poets are the Munster poets of the eighteenth century. And like all the Gaels whether of Ireland or of Scotland, they dislike the sea and make a pittance out of fishing grounds from which their cousins of Brittany would get riches. Their community is a very tiny one: everybody knows everybody else in it, and everybody else's ancestors. In the early days of the generation to which Tomás O'Crohan belonged, their possessions were unbelievably scanty. There was only one pot-oven for the whole community, he tells us (I can hardly believe this); naturally it was always being loaned out. Still, compared to many other communities in Ireland at the time, the Blasket islanders had good and varied nourishment; besides their potatoes and milk, their butter and imported corn meal, they had always fish and occasionally seal meat and porpoise meat; they had no vegetables other than potatoes, but then the peasants on the very best land of Ireland would receive with a great deal of surprise the notion that there were any other vegetables besides cabbage. Their lives are diversified by drinking bouts on the mainland for the men, and for the young people, dances, songs, story-telling and romping love-making in which the girls take the initiative. Their marriages are always arranged by the elders, and illegitimate births are unknown—this in spite of the fact that in the former generation there was neither priest nor chapel on the island, and the girls here, as in other West-of-Ireland islands, have the conduct of rather dangerous maenads. Young Tomás encountered a band of them on a day that he had hoped to put in cutting peat in a bog:

> The worst they could do to me didn't vex or worry me, be sure of that. It would have been an odd thing, indeed, if it had, for it was the wild spirit of youth that was driving them, and sure I had a good right to have a spark of the same fire touching me up, too, for there was many a young man of my own kind who'd rather have them playing their games with him than all the turf on the hills.

How does "The Islandman" compare with that other book about the Blaskets that we were all reading the year before last, Maurice O'Sullivan's "Twenty Years a-Growing"? O'Sullivan is a poet who seems always to have been aware that there was a world outside the Blaskets, whereas O'Crohan comes to have some distant knowledge of such an outside world quite late in life: he is the *shanachie,* the parish story-teller who is also the parish historian. And he deals with a generation that had more individuality than O'Sullivan's, that was nearer to the pioneers of the Islands. O'Crohan, more than O'Sullivan, gives us the sense of what it is to live in these one-room whitewashed houses, to dig, to row, to dance, to drink porter: he gives us the island life more on its own terms. The noteworthy thing about "The Islandman" is that it records this primitive, isolated life as if it were the norm of nineteenth-century life: the fact that a child stays four years at his mother's breast, or that a man is inclined to take a wife on the word of an uncle, but changes his inclination when his sister makes a more practical arrangement, or that people who live on the edge of famine can have joyous festivals, or that men and women who have never been at school can delight in poetry—any given fact is taken for granted, and the life back of it is written of without apology and without eulogy. And at the end we are left with a sense of the dignity of the last real Gaels, lean and unaided, driven to the edge of the Western Ocean and still living their own proud life.

PADRAIC COLUM.

Empire Builder

Strange Destiny: A Biography of Warren Hastings, by A. Mervyn Davies. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 468 pages. $5.

THE ACTIVE life of Warren Hastings is entirely bound up with his service in India under the East India Company. As a mere lad, he entered that service in the capacity of an ordinary commercial clerk, and before he had left it he was Governor-General of British India—which at that time comprised only a small fraction of the present British-Indian empire. His historical fame has a double origin: in the first place there were his achievements as Governor of Bengal and Governor-General of British India; in the second, there was his impeachment by the Commons and his spectacular trial before the Lords, which, after dragging on for seven years, ended in his acquittal. Perhaps we should add as his third title to fame the essay that is one of Macaulay's finest efforts.

Macaulay, though he finds much to censure in Hastings' acts, nevertheless expresses the highest admiration for the ability and the energy of the man who first organized a British administration for Bengal and then saved the British possessions in India at the very time when Britain lost the most important of her American colonies. Mr. Davies, who wrote his instructive book with the avowed purpose of vindicating Hastings' reputation from the aspersions of his enemies and critics, is nevertheless obliged to admit that owing to the difficulties placed in his way by incompetents at home and malignant enemies in India, Hastings came to resemble a "ruthless despot hewing his way to victory," and that he was careless in money matters, kept his accounts badly and at times seemed unable to distinguish between his own and the Company's money. In fact, Mr. Davies' estimate of Hastings is not so far removed from Macaulay's as his milder judgment of particular acts might indicate.

However, Mr. Davies sheds a flood of light on Hastings' career by comparing it with that of other men in the Indian service. That service was full of graft, peculation and abuses of every kind. Men went out to India to get rich quick, and the disordered condition of the country enabled them to achieve their object. Clive amassed in short order over £1,000,000. Barwell, a member of Hastings' Council, came out with £800,000. Philip Francis, the reputed author of the Junius Letters, who was also of the Council, came back with £80,000 after a stay of six years, in which his total salary was £60,000. Compared with these fortunes, the £80,000 that Hastings brought back after more than twelve years' service at the head of the government with an annual salary of £25,000, is a beggarly sum.

It is therefore only characteristic that most of the charges preferred against Hastings should have related to the extortion of huge sums of money from viziers, nawabs, rajahs and begums. And in the light of the man's actual record, it is even revealing. The Whig oligarchs in England seemed to have a real fellow feeling for their counterparts in India, and that this is not a fanciful supposition is shown by the following facts. In India, as in many other Oriental countries, the land was held by village communities. When the British came to Bengal, they were puzzled to find a country without individual landowners. To correct so anomalous a situation, the above-named Francis proposed to recognize the *zemindars,* or tax farmers, as the real owners of the land. This absurd proposal was rendered plausible by the fact that the office of *zemindar,* like all offices in India—or for that matter in feudal Europe—tended to be-

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come hereditary. Hastings, who understood the East, successfully opposed this project while he was at the head of the government. And although it was carried into effect under the Governor-Generalship of Lord Cornwallis, Hastings' opposition to the establishment of a great landowning class on the British model in India suffices of itself to establish his superiority in Indian statesmanship over all his enemies and detractors. HERMAN SIMPSON.

The Big Stick-Up

Privileged Characters, by M. R. Werner. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. 510 pages. $3.75.

MR. WERNER would make an ideal contributor to the Sunday supplement of an ideal daily newspaper. He is an excellent investigator and he writes well enough, and while he is lacking in interpretative ability he is nearly always on the side of sense and decency. He can plow through tremendous masses of facts, documentary and otherwise, boil them down to reasonable space and make the final product readable to intelligent men and women. His present book brings out his qualities even more than did "Barnum," "Tammany Hall" and "Bryan." It is a very skillful rewriting of the evidence—in the records of congressional investigations, in newspaper reports and editorials, and in published apologias of interested parties—of official corruption during the Harding and Coolidge administrations. At the end there is a brief chapter dealing with the revelations made by the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency in 1933.

President Harding was what a Marion friend said of him, "the best fellow in the world to play poker with all Saturday night," but despite the approval with which his candidacy was received by A. Lawrence Lowell, Nicholas Murray Butler, Elihu Root, George W. Wickersham and Charles Evans Hughes, he was no more fitted to be in the White House than Jimmie Walker is fitted to be Pope. The thievery of public funds that went on in his brief administration reached a new high in the United States, which at the time already had to its shame the Whiskey Ring fraud, the Star Route swindle and the Crédit Mobilier scandal. On rereading the testimony of the chief characters in the ghastly story of corruption in Washington in 1921-32—Albert B. Fall, Edwin Denby, Jesse Smith, Roxy Stinson, Edward L. Doheny, Harry Daugherty, Colonel Charles R. Forbes, Albert D. Lasker, William B. Shearer and Walter F. Brown—as ably condensed and paraphrased by Mr. Werner, one is impressed and appalled by the amount of shock a democracy can stand without toppling over. The senatorial investigations did a lot of good in the long run, even from the point of view of the amount of money finally recovered from the malefactors, but it is probably a fact that official Washington was far more scandalized at the corruption in its midst than were the American people. Perhaps the general apathy of the people toward the graft and bribery going on in the vicinity of the White House is to be explained by the relative prosperity of the times, and perhaps there are other reasons. In any case, it is well to have a condensed version of the record, and Mr. Werner has done an intelligent job. One hopes that he will do another book of the same sort about the way in which high American finance has robbed both small stockholders and the general public. The files of senatorial investigating committees, of the Board of Tax Appeals and of the Interstate Commerce Commission are rich with material. CHARLES ANGOFF.

The U.S.S.R. Presents . . .

Six Soviet Plays, translated by Eugene Lyons. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 469 pages. $3.

CHOSEN from the repertory of what theatre tourists from all nations acclaim as the liveliest and technically the most interesting theatre in the modern world, these six Soviet plays will give the reader an understanding of Soviet life that a hundred textbooks could not supply. It is a comment on the novelty of the life they dramatize that, having for years examined Soviet plays for possible American production, I can find hardly one of them suitable for that purpose. Not that they lack drama or humor or social significance, but that they are written for audiences "who have overthrown capitalism," and not for Americans who are still embroiled in it.

Only one play in the present collection, "The Days of the Turbins," follows familiar and accustomed modes of thought; and this is a play not of the new Russia but of the old. It is the story of a family of White Guards during the revolution. Pleasant, decent, unimportant people themselves, they are betrayed by their generals, who run out on them when defeat is threatened. At the final curtain the "International" is heard off-stage as the Red Army enters the city. Reminiscent of Chekhov, the play was at first considered politically harmful and banned, but the ban has been lifted and the drama is now one of the most popular in the Soviet Union.

I have played with the idea of an American production for "Squaring the Circle," one of the funniest plays I have ever read in my life. Yet half the humor arises from a satirical treatment of Communist lingo and the other half from laws and conditions peculiarly Soviet. It is a comedy based on the housing shortage and the marriage laws of the new workers' state. Vasya, Abram and their mates, compelled to live together in one room, fall in love with each other's wives. The theme serves not only to trouble Communist consciences but to provide material for a thoroughly amusing farce-comedy upon the "experiment," as Comrade Abram remarks, "of building socialism in one room." But even with audiences of sympathetic workers, "Squaring the Circle," produced, say, on Fourteenth Street, would not get a tenth of the laughs it deserves and receives in Moscow.

"Tempo" is the by now pretty conventionalized drama of industrialization. Soviet workers decide to beat American tempo, and do it against every technical and political obstacle. "Bread" follows somewhat the same pattern, as applied to the farm, but is a better knit play and more effective. Among other things it dramatizes the Communist theory of self-criticism. "Inga," the weakest of the plays dramatically, is interesting in its transference of the eternal triangle to a Soviet milieu. The conventional Bolshevik hardihood of Inga, an efficient factory manager, proves less interesting and perhaps less significant than the developing character of Glafeera, who changes in the course of the play from a humble and ignorant peasant wife to an intelligent citizen of the new workers' state without loss of individuality or womanhood. "Fear" has been one of the most popular and widely discussed plays in the U.S.S.R. Briefly, a professor of the old regime becomes the center of a counter-revolutionary plot, succeeds at first, but is finally exposed. He recants and, before the curtain falls, is given one more chance. "Fear" has been an unparalleled popular success in the Soviet Union, yet its dramatic conflicts contain few emotions that can be strongly felt by a *pre-revolutionary* audience.

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These last four plays, which all repeat the same pattern of struggle between the revolution and the opposition, suffer from an overabstraction in the portraiture of the class enemy. The individuals who represent anti-Soviet forces are insufficiently motivated and act by a kind of fate that suggests a crude form of economic determinism rather than Marxism. All the plays are admirably chosen for variety of subject, and they pack into one book a comprehensive portrait of Soviet life. Yet when, having closed the volume, I visualize not American readers but an American audience reacting to them in an American theatre, I am struck by the chasm between the life they reflect and that of our own country. Every Russian audience easily identifies itself with the theme of sabotage versus loyalty, of socialist construction, of human nature in a new world. For similar emotional identification of American workers' audiences other themes would be necessary: strikes, unemployment, perhaps the vagaries, humorous and tragic, of the N.R.A., or the growth of fascist tendencies in capitalist America.

This point is made not in criticism either of the collection or the plays as such, but it does give new meaning and emphasis to the profound differences, psychological as well as political, between a post-revolutionary state and a capitalist one—making the book as important to students of society as to those of modern drama.

CHARLES R. WALKER.

A Cosmic Philosophy

Three Interpretations of the Universe, by John Elof Boodin. New York: The Macmillan Company. 519 pages. $3.

God: A Cosmic Philosophy of Religion, by John Elof Boodin. New York: The Macmillan Company. 240 pages. $2.

THE FIRST of these books is noteworthy for its fresh and provocative interpretation of some of the major philosophies. Boodin's comparative freedom from the neat sterility of the usual academic histories of philosophy is frequently reminiscent of Royce and Santayana.

While the entire analysis centers around three cosmic notions, specific views are not distorted to fit an argumentative scheme. "Preformation" is described as the theory that evolution is only a making explicit of forms and stages that are already present in earlier phases of the same history. Boodin regards stoicism as the chief expression of this view, which was later modified by Scotus Erigena, Leibnitz and the German romanticists. "Emergence" admits the appearance of new structures in a material process but denies a transcending guidance. A survey of Emergence in dialectical materialism and recent physics, biology and psychology follows an excellent analysis of Lucretius. According to the third view, that of "Creation," new forms occur under the control of a formative agency which shapes the course of the world within the limits set by the material parts. Plato and Plotinus receive a full and lucid study, followed by a rather casual discussion of the Hebraic and Christian traditions.

Boodin's book on "God" is frankly described as an enterprise of the imagination, designed to lend a poetic rather than an argumentative significance to the cosmic dualism of two ancient myths: Plato's "Timaeus" and Genesis. The chapters on "The Cosmic Tragedy" and "Divine Laughter" suggest much of the blooming exuberance of Walt Whitman, although Whitman's concrete directness of idiom is somewhat wanting.

JESSE V. MAUZEY.

Books in Brief

Twelve Centuries of Rome, by G. P. Baker. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 557 pages. $4.

MR. BAKER'S compact and lively history of Rome has many substantial merits. The successive constitutional reforms are set forth with clearness and precision. The important, and even many of the lesser, military campaigns are sketched with skill, though a few additional maps might have made them more intelligible to the general reader. The most striking changes in the composition, organization and armament of the legion are noted. In the analysis of persons and motives there is a decided independence of traditional authorities. In addition, the book is highly readable. Its one serious defect is the methodical neglect of the economic and social aspects. Not that Mr. Baker is not familiar with them; on the contrary, many a line indicates that he knows them very well. But he slurs them over, as though he feared that the reader might not be interested in such strange things. He may to some extent be right. But there are readers who would rather learn something concerning the actual conditions of life and labor among the masses, even if they had to be told less of oligarchic intrigues, palace revolutions and military revolts.

H. S.

Star of Empire, by Grant Lewi. New York: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.

Jonathan Stark, the hero of this prairie novel, tames men and acres so successfully that at seventy he is a millionaire. In the next twelve years the old sharper and pioneer goes under in the post-war depression in farmlands, and loses everything. At the end he is a very old man, gentle, puttering, completely unaware that he has failed. But Mr. Lewi does not give any psychological basis for this change from hard to soft in Stark's character. Neither does he show any indication—in Stark or himself—that the social implications of such a life have been felt and understood. The only passages of any value (on the incidental misfortunes of Stark's grandson—hail in his wheat fields and death to his wife in childbirth) are so isolated as to seem accidental; and even these are marred by a limited sympathy that refers to migratory workers as "malcontents . . . needing a strong and vigorous hand on them." The prairie is still waiting for a good interpreter.

J. M.

The Secret War, by Frank C. Hanighen. With an introduction by Quincy Howe. New York: The John Day Company. 316 pages, illustrated. $2.75.

Mr. Hanighen has chosen to emphasize the more obviously spectacular elements of the "secret war" for oil. He ranges all the way from the East Texas field to Saghalien Island, and follows the lurid thread of intrigue, bribery, insurrection and plain murder wherever it is permitted to appear through the indiscretion or bravado of the two major contestants: Anglo-Dutch and American. It is curious to find in such a rogues' gallery the "romantic" picture of T. E. Lawrence combining archeology and erudition with England's oil needs in Arabia. The account of Russia's checkmating of Great Britain in Persia is vividly told—but Stalin's family name is incorrectly spelled "Djugasheff" (instead of Djugasvili)—probably as a consequence of the author's having relied upon the questionable authority of "Essad Bey." Also, the Soviet agent "Einhorn" becomes in Hanighen's pages a sort of master-mind

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almost worthy of E. Phillips Oppenheim. Despite faults of detail, and a reliance upon doubtful sources, this book makes an excellent tract for the times. H. W.

Thing of Sorrow, by Elder Olson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 41 pages. $1.50.

This poet obviously aims at subtlety and, since subtlety was the fault of Mr. T. S. Eliot and all of his school, it is possible that the hard-boiled world of today may ignore Mr. Olson, whose notion of poetry is an arabesque of words inclosing some lovely thought existing for its own sake:

Veiled, vaporous, profound,
The speechless twilights pass,
Walk weightless without sound,
Bending no fringe of grass.

Yet to anyone who asks that the poet be sensitive to the color and tone of words, able to suggest an *au délà* possibly extant on the fringe of our consciousness of this bright-colored and oftentimes abominable world, and aware of the most delicate effects of rhyme as well as more than aware of melancholy, this is surely poetry. Only it is not what the world has agreed to call by the term of major poetry. J. G. F.

Contributors

JONATHAN MITCHELL'S portrait of Donald Richberg is one of a series he is writing for The New Republic about New Deal personalities.

HAROLD WARD writes regularly on "The Sciences and Society" for The Living Age. His special interest is in the field of science and technology.

LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY lives in Augusta, Georgia. He has contributed poems and articles to some thirty different publications and is the author of "With Lips of Rue," a single poem of forty-five quatrains.

ROBERT GESSNER is the author of a book of verse, "Upsurge," and a novel, "Massacre." He also wrote the prize poem in The New Republic contest for poems written about the Reichstag fire trial.

HAMILTON BASSO was born in New Orleans in 1905 and has lived most of his life in the South. He went to Tulane University but left college to go into newspaper work. He is the author of a biography of General Beauregard and of a novel, "Cinnamon Seed." His latest novel, "In Their Own Image," has just been published by Scribner's.

W. R. MOSES is twenty-three years old and a fellow of Vanderbilt University in the Department of English. He has contributed to The American Review and Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. His poem in this issue was accepted over the protest of two fly-fishermen on the New Republic staff.

JOHN DEWEY, whose contributions to philosophy and the science of education are well known, is now at work on a book about the theory of logic. His most recently published books are "Art as Experience" and "A Common Faith."

PADRAIC COLUM, the Irish poet, is the author, among other books, of "The Road Round Ireland," "A Half-Day's Ride" and "Collected Poems."

HERMAN SIMPSON, long a student of Marxist theory, was formerly editor of The New York Call.

CHARLES ANGOFF, former editor of The American Mercury, is now on the editorial board of The Nation. He has published two volumes of a prospective five-volume "Literary History of the American People" and is now working on a critical survey of American literature since the World War.

CHARLES R. WALKER takes an active part in the affairs of the Theatre Union and is the author of three novels, the most recent being "Our Gods Are Not Born."

J. V. MAUZEY is the author of "Montaigne's Philosophy of Human Nature" and is an assistant professor of Philosophy at Columbia University.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Herman Simpson, Jerre Mangione, Harold Ward and John Gould Fletcher.

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